

ROUGH  
AND  
TUMBL  
ON  
OLD  
CLIPPER  
SHIPS  
RAMSAY



ROUGH AND TUMBLE

ON OLD

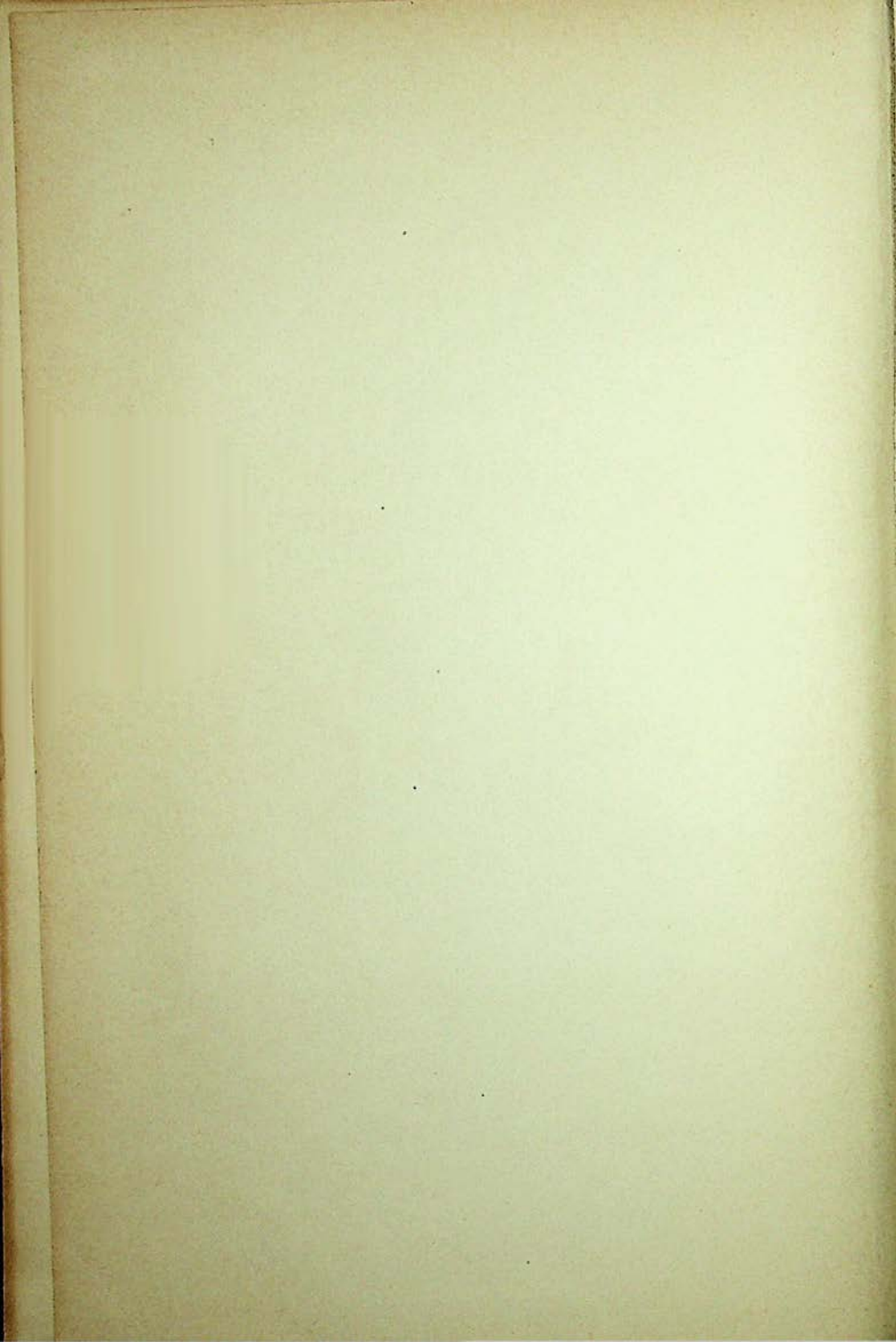
CLIPPER SHIPS

ROBERT RAMSAY



ADRIETON







ROUGH AND TUMBLE  
ON OLD CLIPPER SHIPS



THE  
HISTORICAL  
AND  
GEOGRAPHICAL  
DESCRIPTION  
OF  
THE  
COUNTY OF  
SURREY

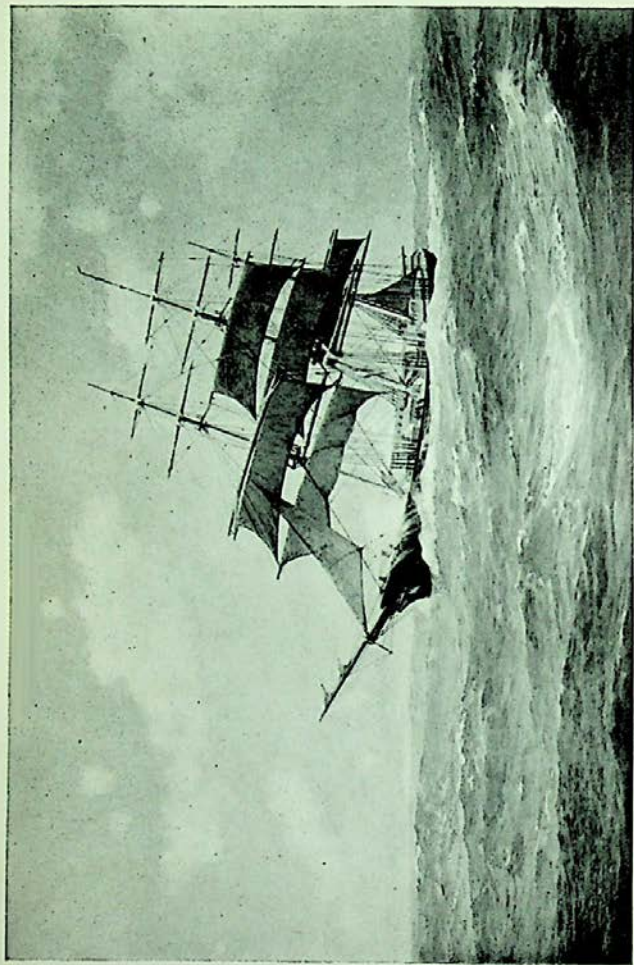
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*THE GLORY OF THE SEAS*  
FROM THE PAINTING BY WARREN SHEPPARD

# ROUGH AND TUMBLE ON OLD CLIPPER SHIPS

BY  
ROBERT RAMSAY.



ILLUSTRATED

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK LONDON MCMXXX



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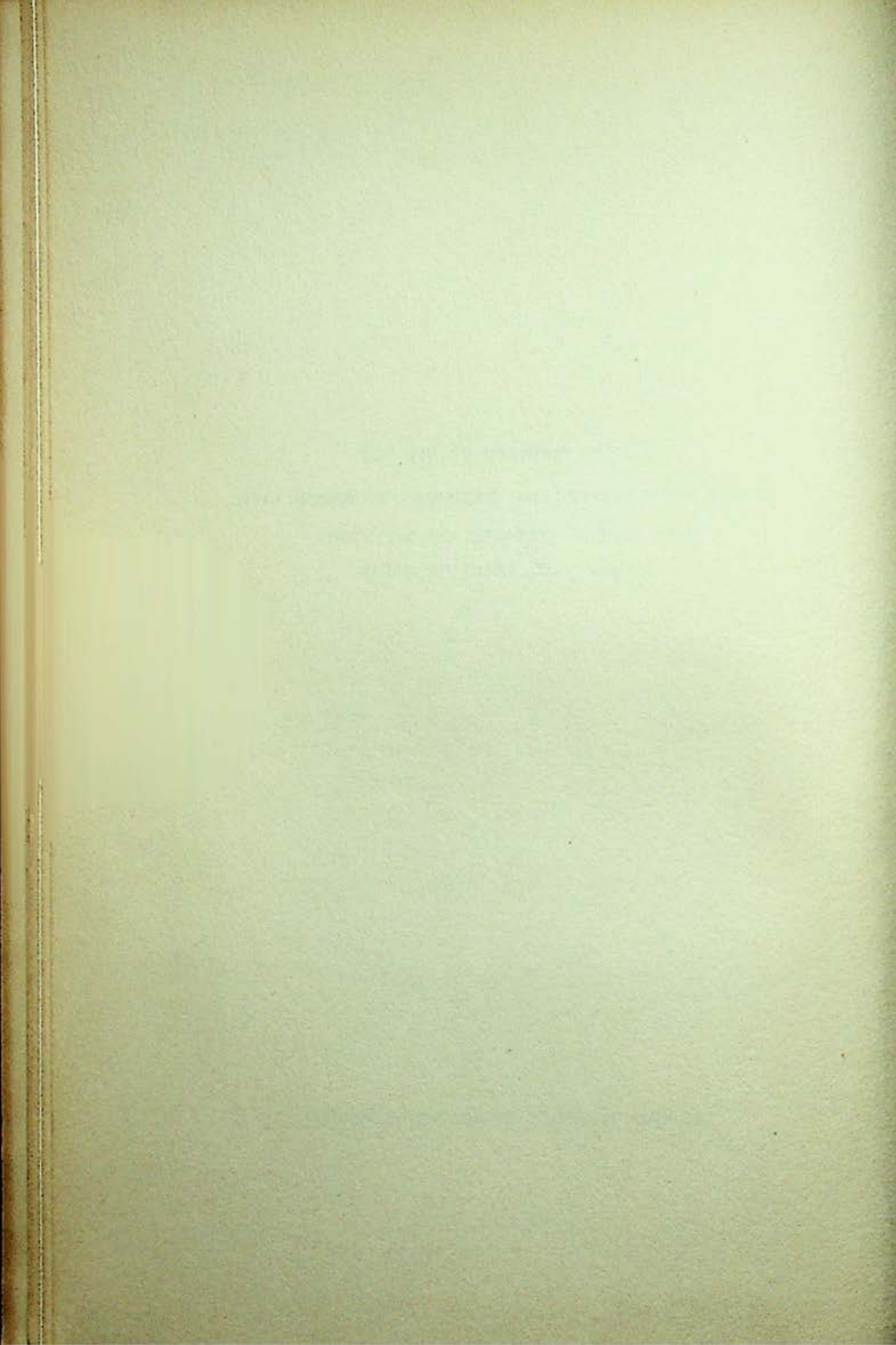
*To the memory of my wife*

WHOSE LOVE BLESSED MY PATHWAY THROUGH LIFE.

SHE IS THE HEROINE OF MY STORY

UNDER THE NAME OF AGGIE.





## PREFACE

ABOUT a year ago my son sent me a list of sea stories published by a New York firm. One of them related, in a very able manner, a voyage taken in 1898 aboard a large sailing ship to Pacific ports and back to New York.

The thought came to me, "Why not I write a story of my experiences, going back to 1865?" Realizing my lack of ability to write, I boldly submitted about half of my story to a literary friend, who encouraged me to finish it, claiming that it contained merit.

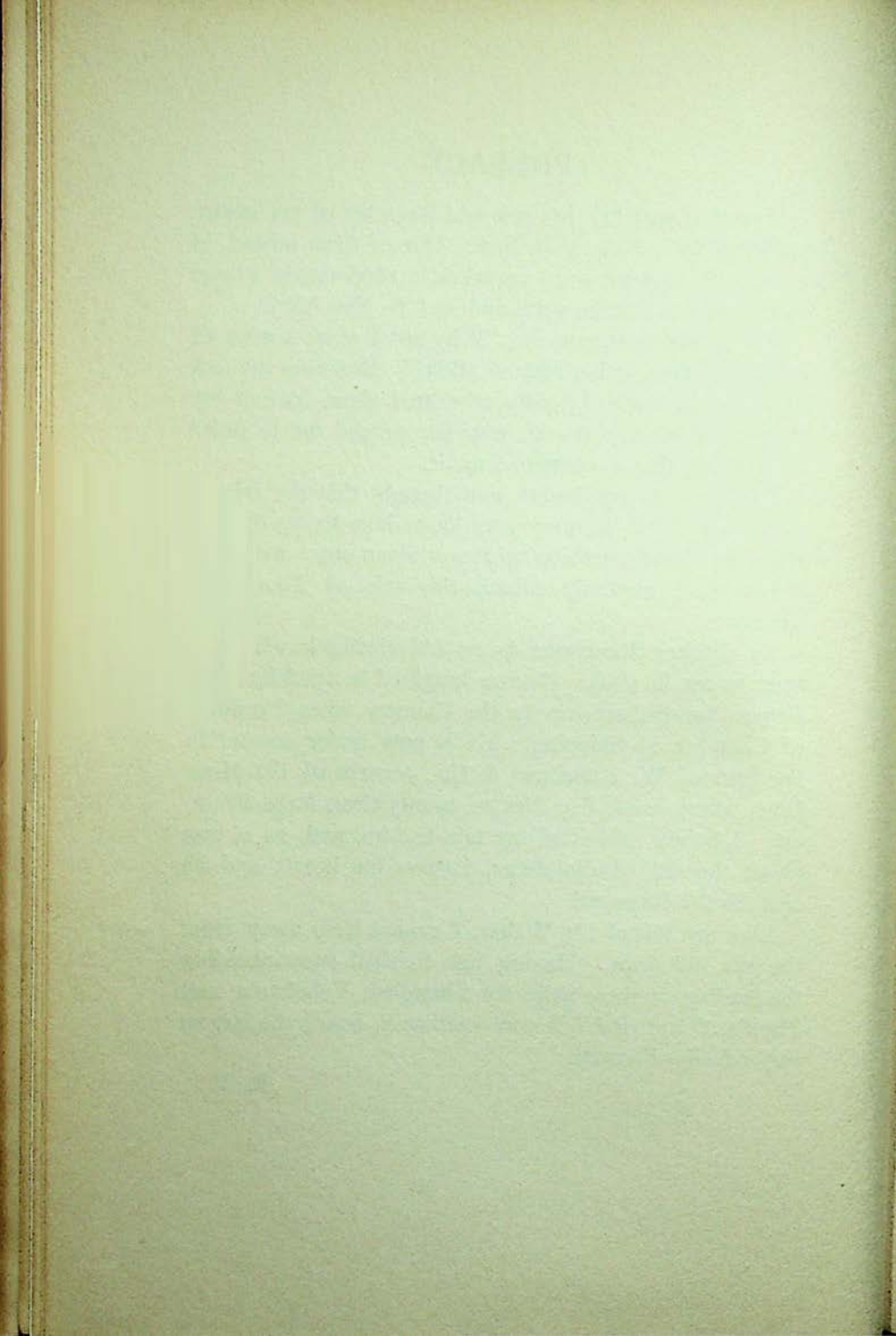
I still had many doubts, and thought that my friends might say, "Bob Ramsay may know how to rig or load ships, but knows nothing whatever about story writing!" However, I modestly submit this tale of Youth and Chance.

Sir Walter Runciman is an old shellback who also went to sea in 1865. He was knighted in 1906 by King George for his services to the Country when President of Chamber of Shipping. He is now senior partner in the firm of W. Runciman & Co., owners of the Moor Line, whose house flag flies on twenty-three large steamers. I boldly submitted my tale to him, and, as it was about the old windjammers, it won his heart; and he sent me the foreword.

Like my friend Sir Walter, I cannot keep away from the sea and ships. Having just finished superintending the loading of three ships for Shanghai, Yokohama, and Manila, "Capt. Bob" is now waiting to board the largest ship of all—*Eternity*.

R. R.





## FOREWORD

CAPTAIN ROBERT RAMSAY has written an unpretentious, though decidedly interesting volume of his early sea training, and subsequent service aboard many of the most famous clippers that were the pride of their owners, captains, and those who sailed in them during the sixties and seventies.

Captain Ramsay pictures vividly thrilling feats of racing, and exciting incidents of carrying away spars, sails, ropes, rigging, etc.; and the prodigies of energy and nimble skill in renovating disaster.

The author of this book graduated and blossomed into Able Seaman and Officer under a harsh and oft-times cruel despotism. He relates the story in graphic simplicity which arrests with throbbing effect. Captain Bob Ramsay must be amongst the very few living sailors who served on the crack sailing vessels that beautified every ocean, until they were absorbed into the oblivion of lost arts by the popular advent of the steamship era.

It is encouraging to me, as one of the oldest sailing ship commanders, to discover an old shellback who has been inspired to revive and record in book form, with modest skill, faded memories of the matchless science of real seamanship.

I wish this worthy old seaman oceans of good health and long life, and that his book may have a wide and popular circulation.

WALTER RUNCIMAN.

*Shoreston Hall,  
Seahouses, Northumberland.*



## CHAPTER IV

The first of the two main divisions of the subject is the history of the art of painting. This is a subject of great interest and importance, and one which has attracted the attention of many of the most distinguished writers of the age. The second division is the history of the art of sculpture, which is also a subject of great interest and importance.

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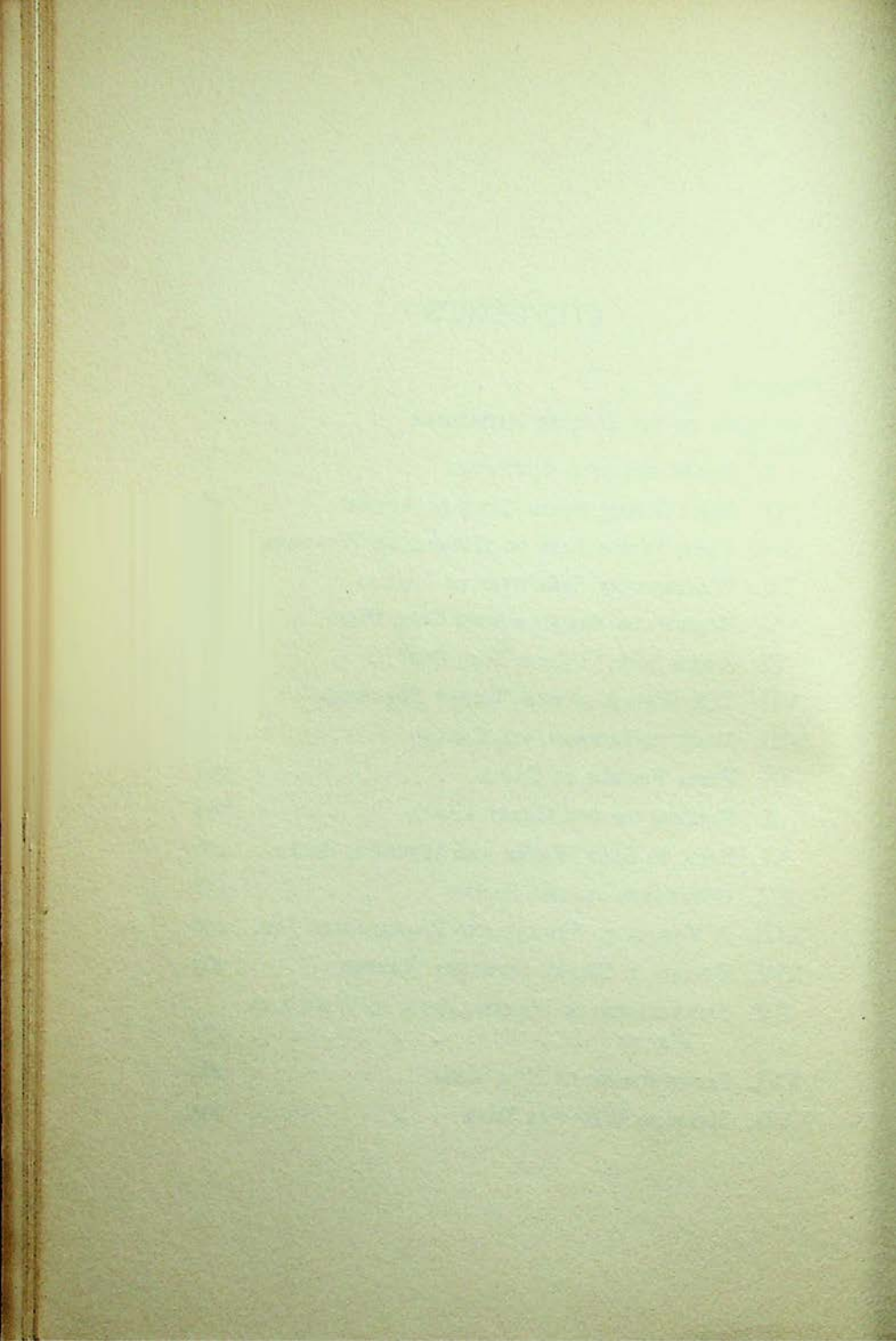
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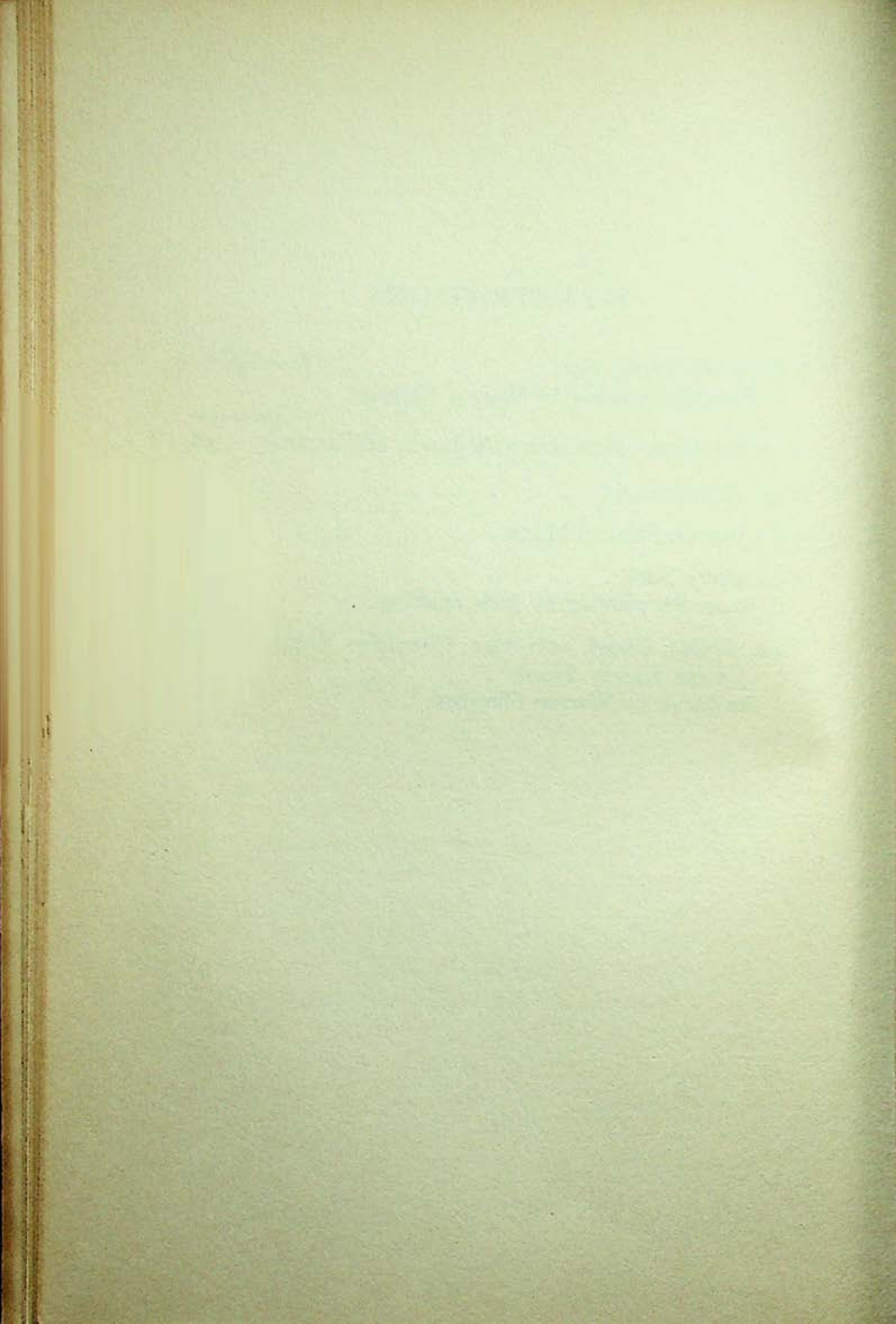
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## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

My Father and Mother realized my determination, and that I would probably run away from home if my longings were not satisfied.

Therefore my parents secured a letter of introduction to Alexander Allan, one of the owners of the Allan Line. Armed with this, Mother and I called at Mr. Allan's office on Friday, November seventeenth, 1865.

Mr. Allan slowly read the letter, and, turning to me, said, "You will sail on Monday at 10 A.M. on the full-rigged ship *City of Montreal*, bound for Melbourne, Australia; and here is your Captain."

He beckoned to a man wearing a silk hat, who smiled broadly when Mr. Allan told him I was one of his crew.

On Saturday I had to sign the ship's articles, with my wages placed at one shilling per month. If I had gone as an apprentice for four years I would have received four pounds for the first year, and twenty-eight pounds, or one hundred forty dollars American money, for the four years.

My parents bought clothes fitted for sea use, such as blue flannel shirts for cold weather, and dungaree pants for warm weather.

My boy friends thought I was a real hero, and I thought I was some guy, myself; but the suddenness of my going rather stunned me.

All our family were at church on Sunday morning, and many eyes were turned on our pew when the minister prayed that God would guide and protect, and bring me safely back to home and friends. When I saw the tears trickling down the cheeks of my Mother and two sisters I was close to weeping, with the realization that home and friends were dear to me. But, thinking it not proper to



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

show emotion, I looked as brave as was possible for a lad who was bound for the Antipodes.

A few pews away sat a family consisting of Father, Mother, three sons, and five daughters. The second oldest daughter was a plump, wee lassie, with auburn curls. I had known her since I was ten years of age, and loved her in my boyish way. I must have had, even at that age, a romantic streak in me. I am an old man with great-grandchildren, but the memory of that sweet, sacred love still lingers. I can sympathize with the poet who so aptly says, "Were you ever in love, my boys; did ever you feel the pain?"

The girl always avoided me, but she had a premonition that our lives were bound together; and she could not keep her eyes away from me that last Sabbath morning.

Monday morning came, and we were up early, with all the family and friends to see me off.

The crew noticed how many girls were kissing me good-bye, and me only a little runt of a boy whom they would soon be kicking and ordering around. However, they discovered later on that there was always something happening wherever I chanced to be.

Looking in vain for "my best girl" I journeyed up the street that ran along the docks, thinking she might be there, and too shy to come near the ship; but I only learned that her parents were already showing strenuous opposition to our friendship.

The lines were cast off, and, aided by a tug, we proceeded down the River Clyde to Greenock, where we lay for nine days taking on a large quantity of gunpowder.

The strange smells, and the unfamiliarity with the work, plus the nine days spent swinging at anchor, made

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me think that perhaps going to sea was not just what my imagination had pictured it.

I was fourteen and one-half years old, rather small for my years, thin in frame, but wiry. When Willie Robertson, an apprentice, with only a year to serve, dared me to go up as high as the main top-gallant yard, I started up the rigging and reached the goal.

With one day left before sailing, my Mother came by train from Glasgow, hired a rowboat, and came one and one-half miles in a rough sea to see her boy, and bring him a parcel of clothing, along with something good to eat.

I climbed down the ladder and got hugged and kissed and wept over. No earthly love can compare with the unselfish love of a real, good Mother.

I shed no tears, as all hands were looking on, but, believe me, I was weeping inwardly as it dawned on me that I was losing my Mother.

We sailed on the twenty-ninth of November, and, as we glided down past the old, familiar seashore resorts, I began to think, "Where am I going?"

What strange men were there among the crew, and what weird experiences were to be my lot?

We passed the Mull of Cantyre, and, as it grew darker, the wind increased. After taking in the three top-gallant sails we got orders to reef the mizzen topsail. I had often heard about reefing topsails, but now I was very much up against the real thing when the first mate hollered to me in no gentle tone of voice, "Come on, nipper, get up there."

I followed the men, and got on the mizzen topsail yard. The bellowing, flapping sail that the men were trying to

## *Bound for the Antipodes*

subdue shook the yard, but I hung on, and even helped a little to reef the sail. The oldest man on the ship was next to me, and told me to hang on with one hand and work with the other; or, as he put it, "One hand for the owner, the other for yourself."

When I reached the deck it was the port watch's turn to sleep, so I went to my bunk, as the first mate had picked me as belonging to his gang, or watch.

It is always embarrassing to attempt to describe a new smell, and for ten days I could not bear the odor from the galley; and then poor, wee "Bob" was dreadfully homesick!

I was very quiet, did not eat much, and did as I was told. I was instructed how to coil up the ropes after shortening or setting sail, trim the sidelights and binnacle lamps, etc.

We soon got out of the bad weather, and sailed into the northeast trade winds when we reached latitude 26° north. I was then more accustomed to the routine of the ship, and found the weather delightful, and my light clothing in order.

But, I did not escape the vermin. Boys seem to be more susceptible to this, as a rule, than grownups.

The boatswain saw me scratching, and told me to strip and wrap the clothing up tightly with a rope yarn, assuring me that this procedure would smother the vermin if I left it for two weeks.

This was something new in my life, but I faced it, and eventually got rid of the vermin.

I had overcome my shyness and homesickness, and the smell from the cookhouse no longer annoyed me, but I was hungry all the time.



## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The first mate, Mr. Pilcher, made me fill and light his pipe in the night watches, and the boatswain also demanded this service. Either one of them would have given me a thrashing had I been known to use tobacco in any form, but I chewed tobacco for sixteen months and not a member of the crew knew it except my old friend Duncan McIvor, he who had given me such good advice while helping to reef topsails my first night at sea. He offered to supply me with tobacco, but I told him I cut enough off the officers' plugs for my use—to pay for services rendered.

Duncan was forty-five years of age, but had led a hard life on sailing ships in the Cape Horn to Chili trade. He was wrinkled, and the skin of his face was like mahogany, but he was a kindly old soul, and taught me how to make fancy knots and splices.

As we neared the equator some one reported that a large ship was in sight astern of us. Late in the afternoon she passed us slowly, but surely, telling us her name was the *Blue Jacket*, one of the famous wooden clippers under the American flag. She was a beauty, and carried a cloud of canvas, including fore and main royal stunsails.

In the northeast trades, flying fish often landed on deck at night, and the sailors caught bonito, and several times speared albacore that weighed forty pounds. The albacore played around the bow, and it was quite a feat to spear them when the ship was going six or seven knots.

How I longed for the day to come when someone would catch a shark. The shark hook was all ready; and when we enjoyed a calm spell, with just enough wind so that the ship had steerage way, the sailmaker reported a shark moving slowly astern.



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

The steward was quickly called, and the Captain told him to provide a lump of pork, and make a little diversion for the crew.

Everybody was on deck, and I eagerly watched the boatswain bait the hook, which had a small piece of chain about two feet long attached to the rope so that the shark could not bite through it.

This shark seemed to be about ten or eleven feet long, and very suspicious. Three small fish about ten inches long acted as pilots. They would swim ahead and touch the pork, then return to the shark and report. After this performance was repeated a few times the shark swam up and smelled the pork, and returned to the pilot fish.

They just seemed to hold a council of war over what was best to do. To my great delight, the shark finally came up to the pork, and, without smelling it, rolled half over and grabbed the bait.

It struggled, and thrashed the water into foam, but with all hands on the rope they slowly pulled it close to the ship's stern, where it was left hanging. The sailors said it was just like drowning, to let it rise and fall with the ship.

A stout line was then passed round the fishing line, and a slip knot made to pass over the head of the shark, and run down to the flukes of the tail. That was hauled tight, and every precaution taken to see that it was secure as they slacked away on the fishing line and let the head go into the water, while all hands pulled on the rope and brought the shark over the stern, tail first. It measured eleven feet, six inches.

A piece of scantling was run down the shark's throat,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

clear to its tail, to prevent war; and when the shark's belly was slit open it was found to be a female, and contained forty-seven young sharks. There was also a jar of tripe which had been thrown overboard two days before.

I discovered that the shark had seven rows of teeth in each jaw.

We enjoyed a supper of shark, and found that the carcass was alive when we launched it overboard that night.

I had developed an appetite that the allowance of ship food would not satisfy. When ordered to trim the compass lamp at night it was necessary for me to go down below in the fore cabin, and from there I groped my way to the ship's stores, where I managed to provide myself with nice white cabin biscuits and brown sugar.

I grew tall and strong, and could sleep at night in any position, which was considered a crime for a boy! The watch on deck could sleep during the fine weather, but not the boy, Bob. It was necessary for the mate to keep awake, and he forced me to do the same. Whenever I was caught sleeping the mate ordered me to fill a pail with salt water and carry it around the poop deck, and as I kept spilling it out the mate would make me refill the pail, creating in me a longing for the day when I would be big enough to thrash him. But years afterward I met him, and felt more like hugging him in memory of the sixteen months I spent under his guidance on the *City of Montreal*. He was good to me in many ways, and instructed me in the science of navigating a ship, so that at the end of the voyage I could easily have passed the examination for second mate.

My habit of falling asleep at any time or anywhere



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often introduced me to trouble, and one night it caused a great commotion.

One of the crew was an ordinary seaman named Hugh Ross, and he had made a bed on the thwarts of a life boat which lay on skids about seven feet above the deck. In the dog watch, from six to eight, I climbed up and cuddled down on the straw mattress, just to see how nice it was, and fell asleep.

At eight o'clock all hands were mustered as usual, but the boy, Bob, was missing. Every nook was searched. Men were sent up to the fore, main, and mizzen tops, and a thorough hunt made in all corners.

Several had seen me lying down on a broad rail just about a foot below the upper rail, and they came to the conclusion I had fallen overboard.

The boatswain thought about my Mother, and while they were walking forward, no doubt saying nice things about the deceased—and those who thought most kindly about me probably said that I was "not a bad, wee bugger," Hugh Ross climbed up to his bed, and let out a yell that would have raised the dead.

It awakened me, and I heard him say, "Here he is."

The mate hollered, "Throw the young —— down."

Hughie obeyed orders, and the mate proceeded to cuff me, first on one cheek, then on the other, until he was tired, or ashamed of himself. There was no one to say, "Poor, wee fellow, he just fell asleep."

So I was sentenced to carry a handspike on my shoulder for four hours, which I purposely kept dropping with a thud just over the Captain's cabin. He yelled to the second mate to send me off the cabin deck, and this



## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

worthy told me to clear out and go to my bunk. I felt discouraged, and badly treated.

I shall never forget the first washday.

With two gallons of water I soaped and rubbed all my clothes, but to rinse them seemed a problem, until I remembered noticing that the sailors made a knot on the end of a rope, placed the knot in the middle of their clothes, put a half hitch over the knot, hauled it tight, and then lowered the clothes into the sea, sousing them a few times.

But, alas, the hitch slipped, and about all the warm clothes I owned floated astern.

None of my shipmates offered to help me in any way, and I soon forgot about losing my laundry, as the weather was warmer, and I would not require warm clothes again until we were away south, running the easting down.

We ran out of the doldrums after we were about 1° south of the equator, and slipped into the southeast trade winds.

A ship called the *Witch of the Wave* passed us, bound for New York. She was a wonder, and had every stitch of canvas set to the fair wind; stunsails aloft and aloft, and main skysail set. This boat was built at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and was the pride of Salem, where her owners resided. It was a break in the monotony of sea life to admire the two ships mentioned.

We had rather a good crew on our ship, and many songs of humor and pathos floated out over the mighty deep. One man had a fiddle, another a concertina; and on Saturday afternoon we were allowed to relax and play, while jigs of all lands were danced.

Our cook was a negro named Joe Blair, black as the

## *Bound for the Antipodes*

ace of spades; but I must say that there was more white and less yellow in his soul than is the case with most white skinned men. He was a thorough sailor, and a perfect specimen of manhood, claiming Greenock, Scotland, as his home town.

The sailmaker was down on the ship's articles as Pat Gallagher, of Glasgow, and claimed to have been second mate of an American ship.

One day Pat called the cook a "nigger." Little did he realize that it meant the fight of his life.

Joe told him to get ready, as he was going to lick him.

I climbed up high on the house, thrilled, and full of fight myself, to witness my first real cruel, and, I think, the hardest fight I have ever seen on any ship. Neither officers nor crew attempted to interfere, as they were aware that Joe and Pat did not love one another, and it was best to let them settle it.

Gallagher was stockily built, and weighed over two hundred; but he was a bully, and had worked his way to second mate on the packet ships that used to run between New York and Liverpool. The Captains of ships in that trade required officers who could answer with a fight the rough types of men who manned them. These men did not want to work, and would even refuse to take in sail.

The two men were very evenly matched as far as muscle goes, but Pat was the heavier.

They boxed and punched viciously, until blood completely covered their bodies.

Pat finally gave up, when he realized that the black man was too much for him, though he did not seem entirely exhausted—simply a lump of yellow took possession of him.



## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The fights which people pay over a million dollars to see in Madison Square Garden are just social teas compared to the scrap between Pat and Joe.

Our sailmaker never mentioned this fight, and it was no use for him to do any blowing about how many men he had licked on the old packet ship *Daniel Webster*.

We had many of such type on our ship, and if any one set up to be boss, it meant *fight*.

I thought myself very fortunate to be one of the crew on a well manned ship like the *City of Montreal*, and to have the opportunity of listening to the yarns about the blockade runners and Confederate privateers, which some of my shipmates eagerly related. I thought, when listening, that I had missed a lot by not being born ten years sooner.

As our ship went south, after crossing the line, the Southern Cross and other night constellations came in view, and we soon lost sight of the stars belonging to the Northern Hemisphere.

I loved to be sent to do some duty aloft, where I could sit on a yard, drinking in the wonders around me in the sky and sea.

We were in the southeast trades, with a light, soft wind, and one day when in latitude 15° south, a whale came gliding along, and just kept pace with us, about thirty feet on our starboard side. Everyone, including the watch below, came on deck, and our officers said it was the largest one they had ever seen; and its nearness worried them. I went half way up the main rigging, hoping to get a better view of the monster. He made no ripple on the water, and did not seem to move a fin to keep pace with us.



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

Captain Biggam was nervous when some one said that it was an old bull that might take a notion to lam us with his tail.

Suddenly the mammal started to run away from us, but, just as suddenly, changed his mind, and slackened his speed until he was in his former position. Then he dived, and before his tail went under he threw a body of water away from us, and with another swish of his tail sent tons of water aboard with sufficient force to knock some of our men flat on deck. The brute had made a direct hit, either in malice or play. I was soaked to the skin, up in the main rigging thirty feet above the deck.

Within six days we lost the southeast trades and had a few days of calm weather with variable winds.

Good luck was following us, and we found a turtle sleeping alongside. One man went over the side, sitting in a bowline so that he could use both hands in turning the turtle on his back, while another sailor helped him by sitting in a bight of rope and slipping a running noose on one of the reptile's flippers. These agile and clever sailors did their part so well that the turtle (weighing one hundred pounds) was soon on deck, making a very welcome addition to our larder.

Happenings such as these tended to keep the crew from getting grouchy, and broke the monotony of the voyage.

Cape pigeons and albatross made their appearance, and in calm weather we fished with small hooks and a piece of pork. The albatross with their great spread of wing, sometimes twelve and thirteen feet from tip to tip, are very graceful in the air, but when they land on deck they are very clumsy, and have no power to raise themselves,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

Several times we enjoyed albatross stew, in spite of the strong, rank, fishy taste.

One morning early we sighted Gough Island, which history tells us was first inhabited by a shipwrecked crew, and lies in the track of ships bound to Australia, or round the Cape of Good Hope.

After the Captain had his breakfast I saw him reach into the cabin companionway for his telescope, and, looking very intently at the island for a few minutes, become very excited. The sailmaker was working on the lee side of the poop deck, and the Captain said, "I think I can see a man on the island!" and handed him the telescope.

Gallagher became excited, and agreed that the man was waving a coat or shirt to attract our attention.

The Captain seemed to take Pat's word for it, and, without another look through the glass, ordered the chief mate to lower our best boat and take four picked men to rescue the fellow on the island.

The air in the latitude of Gough Island is very clear (about 40° south of the equator), and we were seemingly five miles from the island when the boat was lowered, but we must have been about fifteen.

Everyone was greatly excited, and no one did any calm thinking. All work was suspended, except what was necessary for trimming the sails.

To my great surprise we lost sight of the boat very quickly, but could plainly see the water falling from the high, rugged cliffs on the island. In the meantime our Captain grew restless, and walked the deck with great, nervous strides.

The second mate, whose name was Cook, a native of the Island of Arran in the Firth of Clyde, and as fine



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

a type of man as I ever sailed with, had also been trying to locate the man, but all he could see was a piece of vertical rock where the lost man was reported to be frantically waving a shirt. He ventured to give his opinion to the Captain, who was not inclined to admit that he had made a terrible mistake.

To get closer to the island we had to tack ship, and, after sailing for two hours had to tack again. The wind was north, and to reach the island we had to keep tacking, expecting any minute to see the boat and our shipmates heave in sight.

Clouds began to gather in the sky, the wind increased, and suddenly shifted to southeast, with mist and rain.

We completely lost sight of the island, and, as the wind was freshening, the Captain decided to lay the ship to as night came on, and at intervals burn a torch light so that the boat could find us.

Everyone was cursing Pat Gallagher, the sailmaker. Captain Biggam passed in his checks forty-five years ago, but I am sure he never spent a more miserable night than he did cruising off Gough Island, looking for his chief mate and four of his best men.

Morning came, and we could not see the island. Noon came, and then the sun did not come out, so we were unable to determine our correct position.

Next morning the island was visible to leeward, so the Captain decided to run down and circle around it, thinking that the mate would naturally go to the lee side for shelter.

The crew thought the Captain was a bit too cautious, but I suppose he had made one huge mistake, and did not

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

want to risk striking a hidden rock or reef that might be some distance from the land.

As we made the lee side of the island, with every man on the watch, Hugh Ross, on the fore-top-gallant yard, yelled out, "There they are," pointing to windward.

The ship was put round, and immediately steered for the boat.

Within a short time we had it alongside, and everybody took a long breath.

After hoisting the boat and setting our course to clear the island, all hands were called aft, and a glass of rum given each man. Alexander Allan, one of the owners of the ship, was a leading man in the temperance cause in Scotland, but the *City of Montreal* always had two casks of rum aboard, to be served to the crew on stormy nights.

After topsails were reefed and everything made secure, the chief mate would holler, "Grog O." It was good um, and I always managed to get my share from the steward, when Mr. Pilchard was not around.

The mate reported that he went close to the island, yelled and shouted, but could see only the piece of rock. When it came on hazy he steered for the lee side of the island, and beached the boat in a cove. They carried a mast and sail in the boat, and used it; and slept in an old hut which must have been deserted twenty years before. They had no trouble getting drinking water, and plenty of shell fish to eat. As they had matches, they built a fire, and smoked their pipes, really enjoying a night ashore.

They knew the Captain would look for them all around the island, so they made themselves comfortable, and waited until the ship hove in sight.



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

It was an exciting time for me.

Of course the sailmaker was awarded the palm for being the champion liar, and the incident was soon forgotten.

After leaving Gough Island we ran on a slanting course until we got into latitude  $49^{\circ}$  south, and then steered due east for Melbourne.

They call this "running the easting down." My readers may not all understand the theory of great circle sailing, so I will explain it by saying that a degree of longitude is small in a high latitude, as the circle of the globe gets smaller the further north or south one goes from the equator.

We were fairly started on our eastern course about February fifth, 1866, and had all the gear overhauled and made good and strong. We also put on our best suit of sails, to withstand the gales to be expected in that region.

As the cold increased, sailing southward, the boatswain advised me to ask the Captain if he had any old clothes to give me.

I finally mustered up courage enough to go, with cap in hand, and present my case.

The Captain was very pleasant, and smiled as he asked me why I fed sharks with the clothes my parents had bought me.

In a couple of hours the steward brought me a bundle of clothes. The article which I most remember was a coat that required several reefs to make it fit.

I had only one pair of shoes, and they must be kept to go ashore in Melbourne. The soles of my feet were caloused and hardened so I could skip up the rattlings

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

without hurting them. I was getting used to the hard life.

The mate was the only one who kicked me around, and he did it on the principle that it was good for me, and the only way to make a man of me.

One of our crew, a native of Manilla, was a good sailor, good-natured, and fond of a laugh and joke. But, underneath it all, I, as well as the rest of the crew, could see that it was best not to quarrel with him. He did not know much about fighting with his fists, but he carried a long sheath knife which would settle any difficulty just as well. He always befriended me when I got into trouble; and made me a pair of canvas trousers to supplement my wardrobe.

His face comes before me through the mists of sixty-four years with a clearness that is uncanny. I look forward to meeting him, and shall greet him when all my easting is run.

It was not safe for anyone to ill-use me, as someone was always ready to take my part. Joe Blair, our black cook, is also a memory full of comforting emotions.

The *City of Montreal* was over twelve hundred tons register, with a carrying capacity of eighteen hundred and fifty tons. She was fully loaded, and rather deep in the water for comfort when running before a heavy gale of wind. The sea is very heavy, and gathers terrible momentum, having no land to break its force in the Southern Hemisphere.

One day when the ship was running with wind and sea behind her, one sea which was heavier than usual simply ran over her, carrying the helmsman half way along the deck, with part of the steering wheel in his



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hands. Our wheel tackles were all hooked on to control the rudder in such an emergency.

The ship was hove to under the main lower topsail and fore-topmast staysail, while our very efficient carpenter made and fitted a new wheel. We were lucky to have so little damage done when the sea broke over our stern.

We lost time, of course, as it took about a day to repair the wheel, and we were forced to "heave to" with our beam, or broadside, presented to ships going to Australia. We were helpless, and could only hope that a good lookout was being kept on any ship near us.

The watch was vigilant looking to windward that night, but the regular lookout sighted a ship close to, and bearing down on us.

Above the din of wind and sea we could hear the rattle of blocks, and shaking sails as she hauled on the wind, missing us by about two hundred feet. She proved to be one of the big passenger ships, carrying her three lower topsails, upper main topsail, and a reefed foresail; and was probably making fifteen knots. If she had struck us there would have been nothing left of our ship and crew within five minutes.

Was I frightened? I had no time to be, but had a feeling of admiration for the officer on the other ship who acted so quickly, without losing a mast in the operation.

We all should have bent our knees and thanked God for such protection. Some may have done so, but none gave any outward expression of their feelings.

Battling with the elements, on hard fare, with two pounds fifteen shillings a month for wages, was nothing

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

to be thankful for. Everybody's hand seemed against the sailors. Always somebody lying in wait to rob them.

I have seen many sailors reeling down the street, drugged and penniless, two hours after they had been paid off from their ship with eighteen months' pay. That was one of the reasons why many a mother waited in vain for her boy to come home.

I had a lodestone in Glasgow that saved me from being led away, deluded and robbed by the women who preyed on sailors in all seaport towns. As my money came in I kept just sufficient to pay my way home, and got a money order for the remainder.

It *was* hard, however, to see my shipmates having a good time with the girls, while waiting for two or three days to be paid off; but I was looking ahead to the time when the girl with the auburn curls would be in my arms. That would make up for all the hardships, and more than make up for the apparent good times my mates were having their first few nights ashore. Love for the home folks, and the family circle, saved me from many a temptation during my first years at sea.

The carpenter on our ship was not only an excellent workman, but a very reliable character. Some of his descendants may read what I say about him, and correspond with me.

Sometimes I was sent to help him on jobs, and he would tell me tales of the fine ships in which he had sailed. He told me that while he was carpenter on the clipper ship *Lightning*, on a passage from Sydney to Auckland, she made 436 knots in twenty-four hours. That is equal to 502 statute miles.

The *Lightning* flew the English flag, and was owned



## *Bound for the Antipodes*

by James Baines and Co., but was built by Donald McKay in East Boston, Massachusetts, in 1854. I knew Mr. McKay's son in Winthrop, Massachusetts, who verified our carpenter's statement, as he had a copy of the *Lightning's* log book.

When the weather was very rough we had an easy time while running the easting down. The watch on deck was permitted to go inside and make mats for chafing gear, and spin yarns that often hinged on experiences with girls in different ports, and in all countries. The South Sea Island girls seemed to be the favorites. I was supposed to be deaf, but I never missed a word. The boatswain used to send me away, so as to protect my morals.

We would run for days under the three lower topsails and a reefed foresail; and sometimes we would be able to carry a reefed upper main topsail. Having a crowd of good sailors, it made easy work for all.

We were allowed one pound of butter each week, but an equal amount in beef and pork was kept out of our allowance. A great many British ships never gave butter to the crew. We had soup and boullie on Sunday. This was served in large tins, and contained mixed meat and vegetables. It made a very palatable dish, with the plum duff that was made in canvas bags and boiled in salt water.

Pea soup was a standing dish three times a week. One of our crew was so fond of pea soup that he gave me his pound of brown sugar every week in exchange for the pea soup that was left from our mess. I thrived on the biscuits and sugar, and kept in splendid health and condition. No danger of a sailor getting appendicitis when

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### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

he was fed on such hard biscuits, which were made of bone meal and bran, and the coarse parts of wheat.

I never had any stomach trouble, and I give all the credit to the coarse food which I ate in my early youth. Whenever I was hungry it was not safe for the cook or steward to leave any food around and forget to lock it up.

Some of my readers will be wondering if I did not know it was wrong to steal food. I must say, "No"; as I thought it was the right thing to do, when the law of the land allowed the ship owners to give an insufficient supply of food to their crews. I also thought it was right, if ever I got the chance, to rob the boarding house keepers, who robbed sailors and turned them adrift after securing all their money. I have to confess, though, that my conscience told me it was wrong.

Our ship made good time running the easting down, and we were very fortunate in many ways. We nearly lost the foresail, however, while trying to set it after reefing. In some way the port sheet became unhooked, and we had to carry it aloft on the fore yard to hook it on again after clewing up the sail. It was quite a job, in a heavy gale of wind, and a tremendous sea running. The Captain was strongly tempted to furl the foresail, afraid that the flapping, bellowing sail would shake the foremast out of the ship.

We succeeded in setting the sail, but lost one of our best men, a Russian Finn. He fell from half way up the forerigging to the deck. Poor chap, he would have been better off had he fallen overboard, because his spine was injured; and, after two weeks' suffering on that rolling, tumbling ship, he was buried at sea.

He was tenderly cared for in the fore-cabin, with a



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man detailed to supply his needs. A thorough sailor, as all the men of his country usually are; but a man of few words, though he spoke English fairly well.

I never heard him curse, and on Sunday he would isolate himself and read a small New Testament, printed in his own language.

As I look back over the years, I believe he got safely back to his Father's house, in the Land where there shall be no more sea. He never reached Melbourne, but got to the port where all is peace.

All hands mustered on the poop, the only safe place to stand, while the Captain read the burial service, or at least tried to do so. The shrieking gale drowned the sound of his words. No anthem was sung, his only requiem the sound of the restless sea, and the harsh screech of the albatross as they circled round the reeling masts.

Such was the life and death of Karl, the only name by which we knew him.

The cruel winds and ever restless sea took a heavy toll of lives in the old square riggers when running the easting down. The same can be said about the rolling forties of the western ocean.

While running before these furious gales the ship was continually awash, and it was impossible to keep dry. We just turned into our bunks with our underclothes, after squeezing the water out.

I took as much comfort from the situation as I could, and had a lot of fun listening to the sailors growling, and cursing the day they ever went to sea. Their curses, as a rule, included the man who built the ship, and the ——— that owned her.

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The chief mate and the steward had married girls in Cromarty, and both of these men were continually bewailing the separation. They were given a good deal of mock sympathy for showing their feelings.

We had among the crew a German who was foolish enough to advertise the fact that he had married a Scotch girl in Glasgow. One of the sailors, named McTaggart, a born wag and tease, made the German's life miserable by saying such things as, "Well, Dutchy, the woman that married you must have been blind in one eye, and had the other stuffed with straw," and, "I wonder how many times she has married since you left her." Or, "I wonder who she married last, a soldier or a sailor; maybe a policeman." McTaggart was a native of Glasgow, and seemed to resent hearing the German tell how he wooed and won the Scotch girl.

We gradually sailed into better weather, and McTaggart began his usual line of talk to Dutchy, who was lying in his upper bunk. I was listening at the forecastle door, when Dutchy began to distend his stomach, twisting and writhing in his bunk. His eyes were rolling, and froth was coming from his mouth. Some of the men caught him as he was falling out of the berth, and eased him to the deck.

McTaggart had tormented him so much that he had an epileptic fit. All sorts of remedies were suggested, and one man recommended putting hot water cloths on his stomach. McTaggart said that was just the thing to do!

A bucket of scalding water was procured, and they dipped a flannel shirt and clapped it onto poor Dutchy's



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stomach. With a yell that could be heard all over the ship he bounded to his feet, striking out right and left.

The hot water, McTaggart told him, was a sure cure for fits.

It seems that Dutchy could bring on a fit whenever it suited him. He took one in Melbourne and succeeded in going to a hospital, also receiving his wages and discharge from the ship. Wages were high in Melbourne, so Dutchy made money through being able to have fits.

While in the south east trades we were close to, and exchanged signals with, two Holland barques which were headed for Melbourne. Both looked staunch and substantially rigged, well officered and disciplined. The rigging and paint work was in such good order that they looked equal to a man of war having a large crew.

The Hollanders are good sailors, and have always depended on shipping and fisheries for a great deal of their prosperity. I mention these two ships, as they looked ideal merchant vessels. They each had twenty-five thousand cases of gin in their cargo, and, when discharged, loaded horses for Bombay. We arrived in Melbourne two days ahead of them, though we lost two days at Gough Island.

When we were about a week's sail from Melbourne, our Captain told the steward to kill one of the pigs we kept in a sty just forward of the foremast.

Elaborate preparations were made for the slaughter.

One of the men got a large maul from the carpenter, and another had an axe. The idea was to first knock the pig down, and then one of the sailors, who said he was an expert, was to stick him in the right place.

I had the time of my young life watching the operation.

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It is just sixty-four years ago, but the scene comes up before me as if it were yesterday.

Piggy seemed to sense that he had reached a very trying period in his life, and he refused to budge from the pen. From his point of view, something was radically wrong. Men who had given him slops, and scratched his back in a kindly way, were glaring at him with excited eyes, and wanted him to come out. As a last resort they adjusted a running bowline on a piece of small rope, and dragged him out.

Then the fun began.

The pig could run, and with about fifteen feet of rope trailing behind he charged through the gang. As the pig passed the sailor with the maul I thought I was going to see Piggy's finish. The maul was swung, but as far as the pig was concerned it was a decided miss. Pat Gallagher, however, swore by all that was high and holy that it was a direct hit, because he got it on the place he used for sitting down, and it lamed him for a week.

Some kind of a noose had formed on the line round Piggy's neck, and as he ran across the main hatch, this noose caught in the legs of Paddy Duffy, and swept this poor man off his feet. The pig seemed to have gotten his second wind, and succeeded in bowling over several of his enemies, as he dodged between their legs.

Mr. Pilcher grabbed the fellow who was trying to wield the axe, and took the weapon away from him. If Gallagher had gotten the axe on his "sit down" with as much force as he got the maul, it would have made him much shorter.

The carpenter took the maul from the sailor, afraid that he might swing it overboard, and the next time the pig passed the carpenter, he stunned him with one blow.



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Now it was up to the fellow with the knife to do his bit. He went by the name of Belfast, as he hailed from that city in the north of Ireland. Piggy was turned on his back, and Belfast knifed him. But instead of Piggy being finished, he got up and ran shrieking round the deck. Belfast was advised to take a back seat, and another sailor stuck the pig. It must have been in the right place, or else Piggy concluded that he had furnished enough entertainment for one performance, and did not get on his feet again.

We did have a good feed of pork. It might have been on account of being so long on a diet of beef with a mahogany grain and fat belly pieces of pork, that we thought fresh pork the most delicious meat we ever tasted.

We sighted land two days before we reached Port Philip Heads, and on the morning of March twenty-seventh, 1866, a pilot greeted us. In spite of a head wind, he beat her up to Sandrige that night. How smartly that pilot handled the ship, when he ordered every stitch of canvas set, including the mainsail, which is generally clewed up when beating up a narrow channel.

No sooner would the ship be tacked, and the braces coiled down ready to run, than the pilot would shout, "Hard a-lee," and round she would come. That gave me an idea of what could be done with a ship, in charge of a resolute man, making quick and accurate decisions.

How blessed it did seem to be in port, the kindly sun shining on us, and drying our clothes and bunks. What a change from the cold, wet weather we had endured for six weeks, while running the easting down.

## CHAPTER II

### *Meet Susan Auld—Love in Action*

THE quiet and peace alongside the wharf, after the noise of shrieking winds and tumbling waves, made a deep impression on me.

Putting my foot on land for the first time after being four months at sea was a strange experience. Everybody but Hugh Ross and I had been through all this before, and it gave me a thrill I have always remembered.

During our stay at Sandrige, where the ships discharged and loaded, I often sneaked ashore when the mate's back was turned, and went to the head of our unloading berth, where I dropped down on the sand, and just reveled in the sun, and the warmth of the land.

A letter and a few little parcels that a friend in Glasgow had requested me to deliver to his brother and family in Melbourne were uppermost in my mind, and when this man found my ship was in, he came on board the next day, Sunday, and took me to his home in Melbourne, a few miles from Sandrige.

It was such a change to sit at table and have nice things to eat, after holding my tin plate on my knee for four long months.

The name of the family was Auld. They were very kind to me, and wanted me to leave my ship; offering to find me a job, and a chance to do better than going through what I had on the passage from Glasgow.

I would not consider leaving my ship. The pull of



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home ties was too strong, though I did promise faithfully to return and make my home in that pleasant land.

As I have already hinted, the German who could throw a fit obtained his discharge as we were getting ready to leave.

One of the sailors whom I have had no occasion to mention was Jack Gardner. We had been two weeks in Melbourne when the boatswain reported that Gardner was missing. He had drawn two pounds from the Captain since we arrived, and about two months' wages were still due him.

The Captain reported the desertion, and policemen unsuccessfully hunted for him on horseback. He must have had help to get away.

The next I heard of Jack was an account in an English paper of a noted bushranger named Gardner, who was being hunted, charged with murder and robbing banks. The government offered a reward of 5000 pounds for his capture, dead or alive. He was captured, badly wounded, and, after spending a year in the hospital, recovered, and received what they call in Australia a life sentence—fifteen years.

Bushrangers were much after the style of Dick Turpin and Jack Shepperd in England, who used to go single handed, on horseback, and rob stage coaches. The bushrangers robbed only the rich, but they went in gangs of six or seven, on fast horses, and rode into small towns, taking possession and robbing the bank. If resisted, they did not scruple to commit murder.

Gardner had been in Australia before, but as the authorities were after him he got on a ship to Frisco, and

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went from there to Scotland, returning on our ship to continue his thieving propensities.

No one on the *City of Montreal* was taken into his confidence, and, of course, he had little to say about his past life.

He was generous and kind hearted, and would give away his clothes to anyone in need. When poor Karl lay dying, Gardner gave a blanket off his bunk to keep him warm.

The man was always civil and respectful to the officers, and never made himself offensive by blowing his own horn. I often heard him discussed on deck, where I lived with the petty officers. They thought him a man not to be trifled with, in spite of his suave manner.

We all envied his stock of very fine quality flannel shirts. We called them crimean shirts. They were considered, by the sailors of that day, the proper thing for shore wear. Gardner gave me one when we arrived in Melbourne, saying it was too small for him.

So I had a swell shirt to go with the Captain's much altered coat.

Mr. Auld also gave me some clothes when he found I had such a scanty wardrobe. I had no money but seven shillings from my home friends, and the Captain could not advance any, as I was on the articles for one shilling per month.

Mr. Auld had three children, the oldest a very attractive girl named Susan. She was fourteen years of age, just one year younger than myself, and was as developed in every way as the ordinary English or American girl is at eighteen. She was unusually romantic, and considered it



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time to get married, but was kept back by her old-fashioned Scotch Father and Mother.

It must have been the flavor of the sea that took Susan's fancy for me, and she became very insistent about my deserting the ship the night before she sailed. Her Father and Mother were very simple minded people, and had no idea that Susan was making love to me so ardently.

I often slept at the Aulds' home, which was small, and was put to sleep in the same room with Susan and her five-year-old sister.

The first night I could hear Susan tossing about, and I thought I heard her sobbing. I asked if she was sick. She came over to my bed, and whispered that she was crying because I was going to leave, and might never return; or might get shipwrecked and drowned.

I tried to comfort her by saying I would come back to her in the first ship, but she was weeping, and I had to take her into my bed to comfort her.

Susan was a sweet little girl, and charming in every way; but foolish to fall in love with a sailor boy whom she might never see again.

It put me in a very perplexing position, as I had no old head on my young shoulders to restrain and make me capable of giving Susan the good advice, which she stood in need of.

Her Mother was very wise to be strict with her, as she was much too fond of the boys. It was the youth in her that called for youth, and this experience surely gave me something to think about on my way to the ship next morning.

We were a month in Melbourne, and, after unloading in a slow, old-fashioned way, lighters, or small schooners,

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came alongside with stone ballast which we had to place so that the ship would be able to weather the storms we would encounter on our way to Callao, in Peru.

Three men were shipped in place of Karl, Gardner, and the German who threw fits.

I must be excused for not trying to give in dialect the talk of some of the crew, and failing to reproduce as far as possible the way in which Dublin Dan murdered English. It would not make fit reading for a minister's daughter, and I am hoping to have many such read my simple story in my own phraseology.

When the time for leaving the wharf at Sandrige was announced by the Captain, and we were informed that we would have to haul out into the harbor to finish taking on our stone ballast, Mr. and Mrs. Auld came on board and asked Mr. Pilcher, our chief mate, to allow me to visit them, and have not only a half day off duty, but Susan, who was with her parents, suggested that I also be allowed to stay the night with them. The Auld family promised to have me back to the ship two hours before she left the wharf. I am sure it was the nice, sweet smiles which Susan bestowed on the mate that did the trick, and I was allowed to go to the Auld home the day before leaving the wharf.

When I arrived, Susan was waiting for me, and had persuaded her Mother to let her take me for a ride out in the suburbs.

How we did enjoy that lovely afternoon on the banks of the river which runs on the outskirts of Melbourne, all alone; and Susan, seeming to enjoy the solitude, was in no hurry to get back to town. She was so radiant and happy, and looked so charming, that I could not refrain



## *Meet Susan Auld—Love in Action*

from accepting many gifts of youth. She always reminded me that kissing time meant all the time.

Susan had it all figured out how long it would be until my return, and we could be together again. I am glad I had the good sense to take all the pleasure I could out of my holiday that was all love and warmth, as plenty of cold and harshness would be my portion on my way to Peru.

The folks were waiting for us, and what a feast Mrs. Auld had prepared! I knew I wouldn't get another one like it until I reached home and Mother. How anxiously they helped me to all the dainties, and how I did eat!

Mr. Auld had bottled beer, and when the old folks had a bottle I was considered old enough to have one too, and Susan, with her blushing face, always had a share of my glass.

The Aulds treated me just as though I was their son, and Mrs. Auld included me among her goodnight kisses. It was comforting.

I slept in the same room as on my first visit; but I seemed more restless than usual, and twice Susan came over to my bed to find out if I was sick. I assured her I was all right, but afraid her Mother's hearty supper was the cause of my restlessness.

Susan hugged and kissed me, and I felt better; while she made me promise to hurry back to her in the fastest ship possible. The dear girl even made me promise to come in the auxiliary three skysail yard ship *Great Britain*, which made an average passage of sixty days.

I advised her to get some sleep, as she had to take me back to my ship in the morning.

I was thankful that my lines had been cast in such

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

pleasant places for a month, with my portion of kisses from soft, red lips.

We had ham and eggs for breakfast, and Mrs. Auld heaped my plate, and kept saying, "That will likely be the last ham and eggs you will eat until you get home to Glasgow."

Mr. Auld gave me half a sovereign in gold, \$2.50 in American money. How kind these people were; and I was glad to be the link between them and their kinfolk in Scotland. Mrs. Auld parted with me expressing a Mother's affection, and reminded me of my promise to return.

The ship was ready to leave, and Susan came aboard (to the great delight of my shipmates), and left only when the gang plank was being hauled ashore.

I was not the only one who had a girl on the dock to bid good-bye. Every Saturday afternoon, and Sunday as well, we had a large number of visitors who roamed over the ship, making themselves very much at home. Half of these visitors were young girls, and, as we had in our crew several likely, smart, young fellows, the girls singled them out and became friendly with them while we were in port. In some cases they became much attached to one another.

Our boatswain was about twenty-four years of age, and dressed neatly in the prevailing fashion, with a crimean shirt of many colors, blue cloth cap and glazed visor and cover, and white duck pants. He had become acquainted with a young girl who visited the ship with her parents, being assigned the good luck to escort them around; and was invited to their home. He was a decent chap, did not drink to excess, and was a well trained



### *Meet Susan Auld—Love in Action*

sailor, who could get work out of his men without being abusive.

His name, Robertson, came to my memory today while writing. He hailed from Ayr. I am glad to be able to say that he returned to Australia and married the girl. She also was on the wharf to see her lover sail, so I was not the only one that had fallen into a net of love and romance.

However, I was the one that got hugged and kissed; but the sailors said I was only a boy, and it did not mean anything. Susan seemed to think I meant a great deal to her, as she wept bitterly when we parted. It caused quite a sensation when she went to our chief mate and thanked him in a very pretty way for giving me a holiday.

### CHAPTER III

#### *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

WE left Melbourne April first, 1866, and on the morning of April ninth, Cape North, the most northerly point in New Zealand, was on our beam.

Two days after we had hove short on our anchor, hoisted our topsails, and, in charge of a pilot, beat down to Port Philip Heads, I heard the pilot tell the Captain that very few of the ships had such a lively, able crew, who could execute orders as quickly.

Our course was set for Callao, Peru, to load guano at the Chincha Islands. Callao is in  $13^{\circ}$  south latitude. To go there in a straight line from Australia we would have to pass through the South Sea Islands, and were sure to have calms, or light, uncertain winds. All sailing ships keep as far south as possible, and run the easting down, just as they do from Cape of Good Hope to Australia.

Next day we were in longitude  $180^{\circ}$  east, and, to keep right with Greenwich Time, we had two Tuesdays in that week. All hands had been wishing for the change to be made on Tuesday, as that would mean two plum duff days, instead of two pea soup days.

One of the stevedore's gang in Melbourne had given me a young dog, a one man dog, who did not care for anyone but me. He followed me around the deck, and whined when I went up aloft to perform any duty. As he grew bigger he would show his teeth when the mate cuffed me, and try to bite him. This was a source of great



## *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

amusement to the crew. Even the Captain had a grin, when the dog chased the mate.

I had been beaten several times on the way to Melbourne, for sleeping in the night watches, and for letting the side lights go out. Mr. Pilcher used to bang me with a rope end, but had never made me cry. I was simply dumb, and he often hit me harder on that account. The sailors thought it was grit, and admired me for it; but it was simply my nature. The mate was more kind to me on the way to Peru. Perhaps the dog helped; and then, it might have been Susan's charms, and the thought that I was getting big, and had left a girl behind in Australia.

In our leisure time we had the usual singing and dancing.

Cooped up for months, in confined quarters under the forecastle head, sailors get grouchy, just like other human beings who need a change of company and environment. Occasionally there would be wrangling, and, as time passed, this reached the fighting stage. But not until we were near the guano islands did real fighting begin.

Mr. Pilcher had an altercation with one of the men, and struck him. The blow was warded off, and the mate was simply held by the man, and warned not to strike again. Paddy Duffy, who was in the second mate's watch, separated them.

Paddy belonged in Greenock, and claimed to be Scotch, in spite of his name. His chum, Charley McBride, also hailed from Greenock, and proved to be a vicious character. He posed as quite a boxer.

Charley would have been the bully on the ship, had he been physically strong enough. However, he afterwards became Captain on sailing ships, and was known

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

as "Bully McBride." What he did to Harry Lynch, and what I did to him, will be told later on.

One of the men who shipped with us in Melbourne was another spicy character. His name was Jamie McCluskey. He claimed Edinburgh as his home town. When he boarded the ship at Sandrige, with a small valise tied together with a piece of string, our officers and men could see at once that he was a hard case.

McCluskey dropped his valise on deck, and, to my great delight, asked for his stateroom. "Sailor" was written all over him, so the boatswain pointed forward, and told him to keep on going, and he would find his cabin.

The boatswain, pointing to the small valise, said, "Is that your wardrobe?"

McCluskey yelled back, "Oh no; that is only my toilet articles; my valet will be here directly with my trunks."

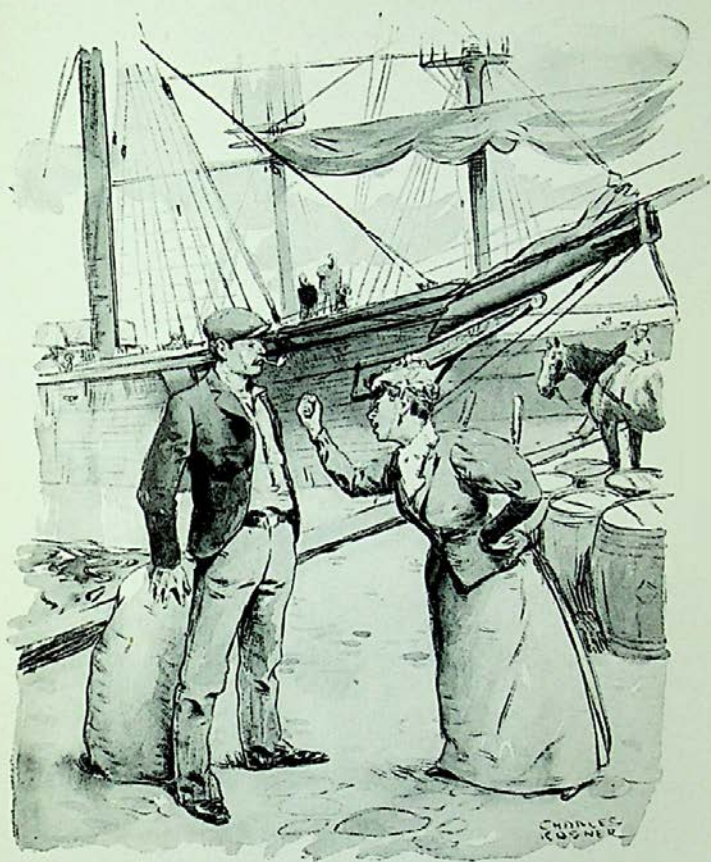
In place of his valet, a woman came who turned out to be his boarding mistress, who had just discovered that he was leaving her, owing five weeks' board. The lady had acquired some sea phrases, and called Jamie a dirty swab, and a low down scoundrel. I cannot repeat some of her language; it was pure billingsgate.

The terms she used were very vulgar, and not fit for a young girl like Susan to hear. The woman was tough, and, for half an hour before the gangway was hauled ashore, abused her boarder.

McCluskey did not try to avoid her, as he might have done; and he handled his tongue in a way which only made matters worse.

He would say, "Now, Mrs. Ginger, caum yersel, like a guid woman, or you will be losing some more of your teeth."





THE BOARDING MISTRESS AND JAMIE MCCLUSKEY





## *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

Mrs. Ginger was very deficient in the teeth line, having only two stumps, which made her lisp badly; and was providing a very decided addition to the entertainment she was furnishing our crew, as well as the crews of two other ships.

Jamie bid her "Guid nicht," and she tried to spit at him, amid jeers and laughter.

As our lines were being cast off, Jamie accounted for the non-appearance of his valet by saying that his dress suit was being pressed, and his baggage would just have to be brought in a tug.

"But ——— the expenses," he said; "my father's weel off."

McCluskey was a product of the times in which he lived. He was about thirty-five years of age, and had sailed in the clipper ship *Dreadnaught* that used to carry passengers from New York to Liverpool. Hard driving at sea, and dissipation in port; being drugged by boarding house keepers who robbed him, and crimps, had been his lot for years. His physical powers seemed to be fairly good, and, as my readers will find, he could fight if necessary.

Our ship was in ballast trim, and did not ship heavy seas, so that, as a rule, we had dry clothes. Sometimes the top of a sea would break on our weather quarter, and drop viciously on deck. Those who got wet were only laughed at, and it was always taken in a good-natured way.

"Boy Bob" was not allowed much rest, as the mate seemed to think it was good for me to be kept working. He still hollered for me, on the night watches, to go aloft and overhaul the buntlines, sometimes to the main royal yard.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

I could sleep there as well as on deck, but always took the precaution of passing a gasket round my body and fastening this to the mast. I was growing fast, and it did seem as if my young frame required a lot of sleep. Sometimes the mate had to do a heap of hollering to get me down, when I pretended not to hear him. Often it was necessary for him to send a man aloft to continue his yell!

Life was not so hard for me in those days of fine weather. I had my serious moments when, alone on the lofty masts, I thought of home and Mother, and the girl; wondering, as the albatross and stormy petrels circled round my head, if she would ever let me hear her say, "Bob, I love you."

I had heard Susan say that enough, but she was not Aggie.

Susan was charming, but lacked depth of character, or she would not have made love to me so ardently on such a short acquaintance. I did not realize this when I was with her; but came to this conclusion after we left Sandrige—that I also would soon be forgotten.

When our ship got in latitude 40° south, and longitude 75° west, we edged away to the northeast, and for several days had moderate winds and pleasant sailing. The atmosphere and weather were simply delicious; and I am glad I have something more than just a hard luck story to tell about the sea. I now would love to go over again this same route, in a well found ship just like the *City of Montreal*.

I discovered a new sweetheart in her figurehead, which was a lady of very generous proportions—seven feet tall. She had bunches of grapes twined in her wooden locks,



## *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

and I often went out to the jib-boom end, just to get a peek at her. As she was the only piece of femininity in sight, I learned that all hands sought her inspiration for their love problems.

The *City of Montreal* was old-fashioned, though well found in her sails. All her shrouds, stays, and backstays were made of tarry rope. Wire was just coming into use for ships' gear.

My readers may wonder whether or not these old wagons paid. Just let me say here that the Allan Line, and other lines, were ordering steamers to be built for them, from the earnings of this type of ship.

Let me give a concrete example. Our ship made money enough to pay all the expenses of the voyage of sixteen months, on the freight she carried to Melbourne. The five pounds per ton she earned for freight on 1850 tons of guano made large dividends for her owners. On a previous voyage she made seven pounds per ton for freight on guano. When I tell you that such a ship as this could be built in Quebec or Miramichi for \$60,000, it is easily figured that a nation which owned ships was bound to make money.

One of the worst, and most lasting, calamities growing out of the Civil War was the tremendous decadence in American ships. America had the lead over Great Britain in the swiftness of her clipper ships. England had assigned ships such as the *Lightning*, and *James Baines* to be built in East Boston, Massachusetts, by Donald McKay.

When we get clear of shipping board rule, and back to private ownership, I hope to see great wealth earned on the sea by our American Merchant Marine.

During the Civil War many of the clipper ships were

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

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## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

sunk by the *Alabama*, and other Southern privateers, and many put under the British flag to save them from destruction.

Captain Biggam, as a rule, did not interfere in the work of the ship, especially when things were running smoothly. There was no prospect of our making a fast passage; but we did expect to make it under fifty days.

Just before getting into the southeast trades, in latitude 30° south, we had an experience I shall never forget. The ship was under full sail, and also carrying lower, topsail, and top-gallant studding sails on the fore and main masts. We had the wind on our port quarter, making ten knots by the log at 4 P.M. when Mr. Pilcher hove it. Shortly after, the Captain came on deck, and, looking to windward, called to the mate, "Take in all the stunsails, lively. Call all hands, and take the fore and main at the same time."

The mate thought it was a strange thing to do, but when the Captain voiced that the barometer had been falling steadily since morning, and since noon had fallen five tenths, he hurried the men aloft to not only take in the sails, but rig in the booms and secure them.

The sailmaker and carpenter put away their tools, and a few men helped Gallagher to drop the topsail he was working on into the fore-cabin.

The royals were clewed up, and I went aloft to furl the mizzen royal. Clouds were gathering in the western sky. The crossjack and mainsail were clewed up and furled. The carpenter and sailmaker put on their oilskins and worked with us, trying to get the sails furled before the storm struck us.

The next order was to take in the fore and mizzen top-



## *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

gallant sails. The sun was sinking in a bank of purple clouds which were rapidly travelling our way. The mate ordered the main top-gallant sail clewed up, and the four men who went aloft were told to furl it securely.

The sea is bewildering and uncertain; and the wind was increasing so rapidly that the change in sea and sky was miraculous.

The mizzen topsail was taken in and furled, spanker brailed in, and gaskets passed on it, and all the jibs furled, leaving on her only the fore-topmast-staysail.

A rumble of thunder seemed to warn the Captain that caution was necessary, and slowness of action might mean the loss of his masts. Orders were given to take in the fore and main upper topsails, and the lower mizzen topsail. Everyone that could be spared went aloft and passed the gaskets. Then the fore-topsail was clewed up, and the port watch, including boatswain and carpenter, went aloft to furl it.

The thunder and lightning increased, and the terrible volcanic crashes shook the ship, as we went up the rigging to furl the topsail. I belonged to the port watch, and was told by the boatswain to keep close to the mast where he was trying to get the bunt gasket passed.

We had gotten the sail nearly secured when the hurricane struck, taking the sail, not only from our grip, but tore it from the yard. It went driving ahead in the awful darkness that surrounded us, between flashes of lightning.

The ship lay down on her beam ends, and if we had ballast that could have shifted, we never would have righted.

The lower main topsail went clean out the bolt ropes; and two of our men were swept off the lee side of the

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

fore-topsail yard. I was thrown against the mast, and, grabbing the rigging, got my arms and legs round the topmast backstay, and slid down to the deck. The remainder of the port watch reached the deck safely.

All were bruised, and had little clothing to cover them.

The small storm staysail forward was all the sail set, and as it was new, with double sheets on it, it stood the strain; and was a great help, not only in keeping us before the wind and sea, but in keeping good steerage way on our ship. The ship righted when the lower main topsail blew away, so we began to feel that, no matter how hard it blew, we were safe.

When the men were mustered on the poop it was found that a little chap named Bill Somers, alias Cockney Bill, and Dan Maloney were missing. Neither of these men were considered really good sailors, and never took the lead in any work. Always the last to get in the rigging when it was reef topsails. Drifters on the sea of life, ambition gone under the hardships of sea life.

And, worse than all, the shore sharks; they were as cruel and remorseless as any shark in the West Indian waters. Survival of the fittest seemed to hold good on that topsail yard.

The weak ones went overboard, and the strong just fought their way to safety.

I was like a cat in agility, and with capacity to hang on. I took breath-taking risks, and did stunts such as coming from the fore-topsail yard onto the fore yard, via the leach, or edge of the topsail. A standing order was given the mate by the Captain to thrash me every time I was caught taking these chances. It pleased the sailors to watch me, but I had to perform such tricks on the



## *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

foremast, as they could not see me from the quarter-deck when the mainsail was set.

The hurricane spent its force about eleven o'clock at night, and the lashing streams of rain that had beaten upon us as we tried to clear the decks, ceased as the wind abated.

All hands had been given a glass of rum.

The cook and steward had been working with us, and the cook especially did more than one man's work. They were able to serve hot coffee about midnight, and bread and cold beef, for which I, for one, was very thankful.

There was no chance to help our two unfortunate ship-mates.

I never saw sailors hang back, no matter how great the risk, when there was any chance at all of saving life.

There was nothing in Bill Somers' clothes bag in the way of an address which would enable us to notify his kinfolk. Many such cases occurred in the old ships, and the story was often told round the hearth of the boy who never came back.

Through all my wanderings, shipwrecks, and narrow escapes from death I am sure the good hand of God preserved me. Well, I am thankful to Him; and when I look at the sun going down behind the Orange Mountains from the windows of my home in Maplewood, I think on the sun that tried to pierce the leaden clouds as the storm gathered in the west the night poor Cockney Bill and Dan Maloney went hurtling into the sea, without time to say a prayer.

Such was life at sea in 1865, in the old square riggers.

No compensation, on land or sea; and I well remember how many men were killed at longshore work in New

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

York, men whose wives and children never received a cent of compensation. That was the case until 1890; then conditions for the worker improved.

As I write of the inhumanity of the employing class in the last century I rejoice with both employer and employed that a new day has come. There is more of the spirit of the Saviour of Men, who came to bring peace and justice into the world.

Preaching will never get us to Callao, but hard work did.

We set the upper topsails, and the top-gallant sails, shortly after midnight. Some men were put with the sailmaker to get lower topsails out of the sail locker and fit them with the earing and rovings, which could be done better on deck.

A glorious moon broke through the scattering clouds, and the topsails were hoisted as the old chanty songs were sung.

The men had no lack of sorrow over the loss of their shipmates, but it did not seem possible to hoist the sails and pull unitedly without the old chanty songs.

*Sally Brown, I love your daughter,*

*Blow, boys, blow.*

*I love the place where she gets her water*

*Blow, my bully boys, blow.*

Joe Blair, our good old darky cook, was untiring in his efforts throughout the night, helping clear the wreck. Joe also kept us supplied with coffee, and boiled salt horse. The coffee was not made in a percolator, but in the same big pot in which we made the pea soup. It was hot, and



### *From Warm Lips to Hurricane Weather*

with the two drinks of good, old Jamaica rum, enabled the men to work cheerfully, as they put on dry clothes and got warmed.

Three days after the hurricane the albatross quit following us, and we emerged into the southeast trades in latitude 26° south.

The cape pigeons, enjoying the warm weather, followed us into Callao harbor about June twenty-second, 1866; we having made the passage from Melbourne in fifty-two days.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Waterfront Señoritas in Callao*

I WAS delighted when Mr. Pilcher told me to put on my best clothes, and, with Will Robertson, take the Captain ashore in the gig.

A side ladder was rigged so that Captain Biggam could walk down with dignified comfort.

A Captain of a square rigged ship would never think of going ashore without his tall hat, especially on the foreign trade; and our Captain was no exception.

We were usually ordered back to the ship after landing the Captain, and told to return at some stated time.

I had been told that the ruins of old Callao could be seen lying at the bottom of the bay, about a mile from the mole, or wharf. I persuaded Willie to pull up there in the gig, and, sure enough, down through the clear water lay stone buildings, just as they were submerged by an earthquake many years before.

It was a picture of mystery and sorrow, and brought to my mind a lasting realization of the humbleness of *man*.

Willie and I went on board and had dinner, including fresh meat, which had come from shore. No choice cuts were given, and the meat was tough, and of very poor quality. However, it was a change. McCluskey said that the piece he got must have been from very close to the animal's ears.

About four o'clock we went ashore for the Captain,



## *Waterfront Señoritas in Callao*

and I bribed Willie to go and view the city of old Callao, by promising to buy him a drink out of the money Mr. Auld gave me.

Captain Biggam not being in sight, Willie said he would like that drink. So we went up the mole, and, as he had been in Callao before, knew the ropes. We went into a liquor store, and Willie had a drink of pisco, the native whiskey. I drank something they called beer.

Willie said he would like another drink, as he had a pain in his stomach. I paid for his second drink, and used the change to buy some fruit.

I walked back to the boat, and was more than satisfied to watch the strange people, and enjoy the relaxation from the drudgery on the ship; but Willie was restless, and asked if I would lend him half a dollar, as he wanted to get some soap.

I should have known better than to give him money. He loved liquor, and when he got back to the boat I realized that he had not bought soap.

Unfortunately, Willie was one of those who could not carry liquor like a gentleman.

The Captain came down the mole, stepped into the boat, and I shoved off. Willie got his oar into the rowlock, but on his second stroke caught a crab which landed him in the Captain's lap. At first Captain Biggam did not sense that it was drink, and asked Willie what was wrong.

Willie made some futile efforts to resume rowing, but when he caught another crab, decided it was best, and easiest, to lie perfectly still in the bottom of the boat.

The Captain was white with passion, and swore that he would flog him when we got aboard.

The gig was too heavy for me to pull alone, so Cap-

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

tain Biggam's dignity was insulted when he had to take an oar.

When we reached the ship, and the Captain told what had happened, two men came down and pulled Willie up the accommodation ladder. The mate, under orders from the Captain, gave Willie a good thrashing with a rope's end, and put handcuffs on him after his arms had been placed round a stanchion.

The day following our arrival at Callao, a ship flying the American flag came and anchored near us. She hailed from Newburyport, Massachusetts, and her cargo was Chinese coolies. The total number the ship carried was three hundred and fifty. Thirty-three died on the passage, and seventy-five were unable to walk, and were hoisted over the side into a scow and taken ashore.

The inhumanity and ill-treatment I witnessed seemed a terrible state of affairs—and it is only sixty-three years ago.

Slavery had been wiped out in America, at a fearful cost; but here were three hundred and fifty human beings packed into a ship's hold for sixty-five days. Most of the deaths were caused by dysentery; and many who were lowered over the ship's side died later from the same cause.

In conversation with the boat's crew, at the mole one day, I learned about the unsanitary conditions on board their ship. There were no toilet facilities, and only a few were allowed on deck at a time.

Of course there was always a danger that some of the strong, resolute characters might take the ship when they found themselves ill-treated.

The coolies were brought from China under a seven-



## *Waterfront Señoritas in Callao*

year contract, to work for the Peruvian government on the guano islands.

The whole thing was a question of money—the more coolies the ship carried, the more money for the ship's owners. These owners were, no doubt, church going people who gave liberal donations to foreign missions.

One quiet day in Callao harbor, a boat with three men came alongside. They came aboard by the gangway, and walked forward.

Talking with the sailors, they wanted to know if any of them wished to leave the ship. They said that wages in Callao were thirty dollars per month; but they did not tell them that when signing on there was an advance paid, amounting to three months' wages, this fee belonging to these men who rounded up the help; and the men who were hired would never see one cent of it.

When the cost of taking them ashore, the three day board bill, and the consul's and ship master's fees were added up, they came to within a dollar of the three months' advance, which was ninety dollars. When the ship reached England after a four months' voyage, the sailor had one month's pay due him; and, after deducting tobacco money, and stuff from the slop chest, he might have ten dollars with which to go ashore.

That wrong could never have gone on without the sanction of the British and American consuls, and these belonged in the same class as the crimps and runners in Callao and Frisco.

One of these runners, an Irishman named Jack Brett, was six feet three inches tall, and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, all bone and muscle. His face was covered with scars and cuts received in fights with ships'

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officers who objected to having their men taken off their ships.

One of Brett's partners was a Swede named Olsen. Olsen was an inch taller than Brett, and heavier.

These two were a pair of brutes of whom the world should have been rid, many years before.

They did most of their business with American ships which owed their crews ten or twelve months' pay; while the Captains made ten dollars a head for all the men taken by force from their ships at night. Brett and his partner would simply drive them at the point of a gun, down into boats. The Captain and his officers remained in the cabin while this went on, ignoring a case of robbery, and making easy money on the Captain's part.

Many ships were lost after leaving Callao and Frisco with crews on the three months' advance plan. Rather than work out the three months' advance, derelicts among the crew would cut through the lanyards of rigging, and the mast or masts would go over the side in a squall, often making it necessary to go into some port to refit, where the crew would leave.

Only with a crew of many nationalities could Brett and his gang succeed. With a crew of Americans and English, Irish and Scotch, they often failed in driving the men ashore.

I am ashamed to write about such men, but it is necessary if I am to present this phase of a sailor's life in 1865.

The runners have often put dead men on board, and collected the advance money; telling the mate that the dead man was drunk.

It does seem impossible that such things were done, but anyone who wants to be sure that I am writing the



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truth can easily verify my statements by visiting some of the old sailing ship men in Snug Harbor, Staten Island. I love to go there myself; and it is a job to get away from the old fellows when they find that I can go back with them and talk about the old guano island days.

Callao was a busy place in 1866, where all ships going to load guano at the Chincha Islands had to call. They had to enter at the government department that controlled the guano output.

The Charter party called for the ship to be willing to lie ninety days loading, and to load to a mark placed on the ship. Then the loaded ship had to return to Callao, and pass the government inspection.

I enjoyed five days in Callao, and was able to see some of the town. The climate is delightful, and the Peruvians and their way of living was a source of much amusement to me. They did hate to work, and lounged around the wharves enjoying the sunshine.

It took us five days to go from Callao to the Islands, though the distance is only one hundred and twenty miles. It is a dead beat to windward, in the southeast trades; and, as the wind was light, the passage seemed long.

When we arrived, a Peruvian official came aboard and told us where to anchor. We let go two anchors ahead, and then ran a kedge anchor out over the stern. This was done to keep the ship from swinging.

There was an average of three hundred ships anchored round those three small islands; and their capacity varied from one thousand up to three thousand tons.

Many of these degraded ships had been proud carriers of distinguished passengers. I would like to name a few of the ships which were loading then, ships which had

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made wonderful passages; and I hope it may give a thrill to some old sailor.

There was the clipper ship *Dreadnaught*, which had made such fast time across the Western Ocean when Captain Samuels was in command. I thought it sacrilege to have a ship which had done such splendid service, carrying guano. The owner of Nancy Hanks, or a winner of the English derby, would never put his horse in a dump cart when its racing days were over.

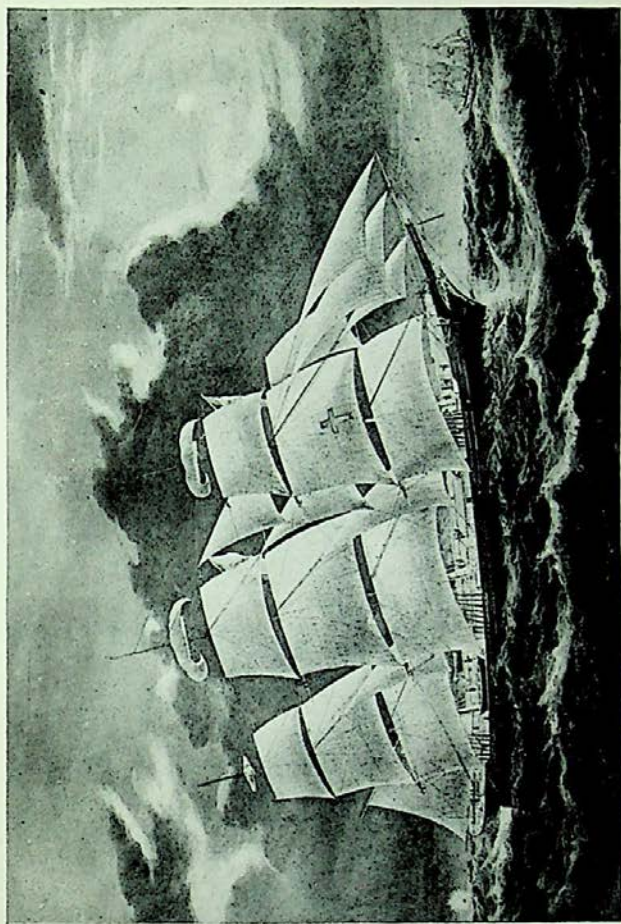
The *James Baines* lay near us. She was built in East Boston, Massachusetts, by Donald McKay, for the English firm of James Baines & Co. During the Indian Mutiny in 1857 she was chartered by the British Government to carry troops. One of the famous races between clipper ships was a run from London to Calcutta by the *James Baines* and the *Champion of the Seas*. These two ships raced into Calcutta with only minutes between the time made by the winner and the loser, over a course of sixteen thousand miles.

Yacht racing does seem tame when one thinks about such a contest between these two mighty ships. They carried every stitch of sail, close to their anchorage, including royal stunsails. They were three skysail yard ships, and had a moonsail on the main.

The *Morning Star* and the *Morning Light* were in the Chinchas too. They were big, powerful ships, with a very clear run aft, but very sharp forward. The old critics amongst our crew said that, in a breeze, they had no shoulder to lie down on, as their sharpness, or leanness, as the sailors called it, extended right to the fore rigging.

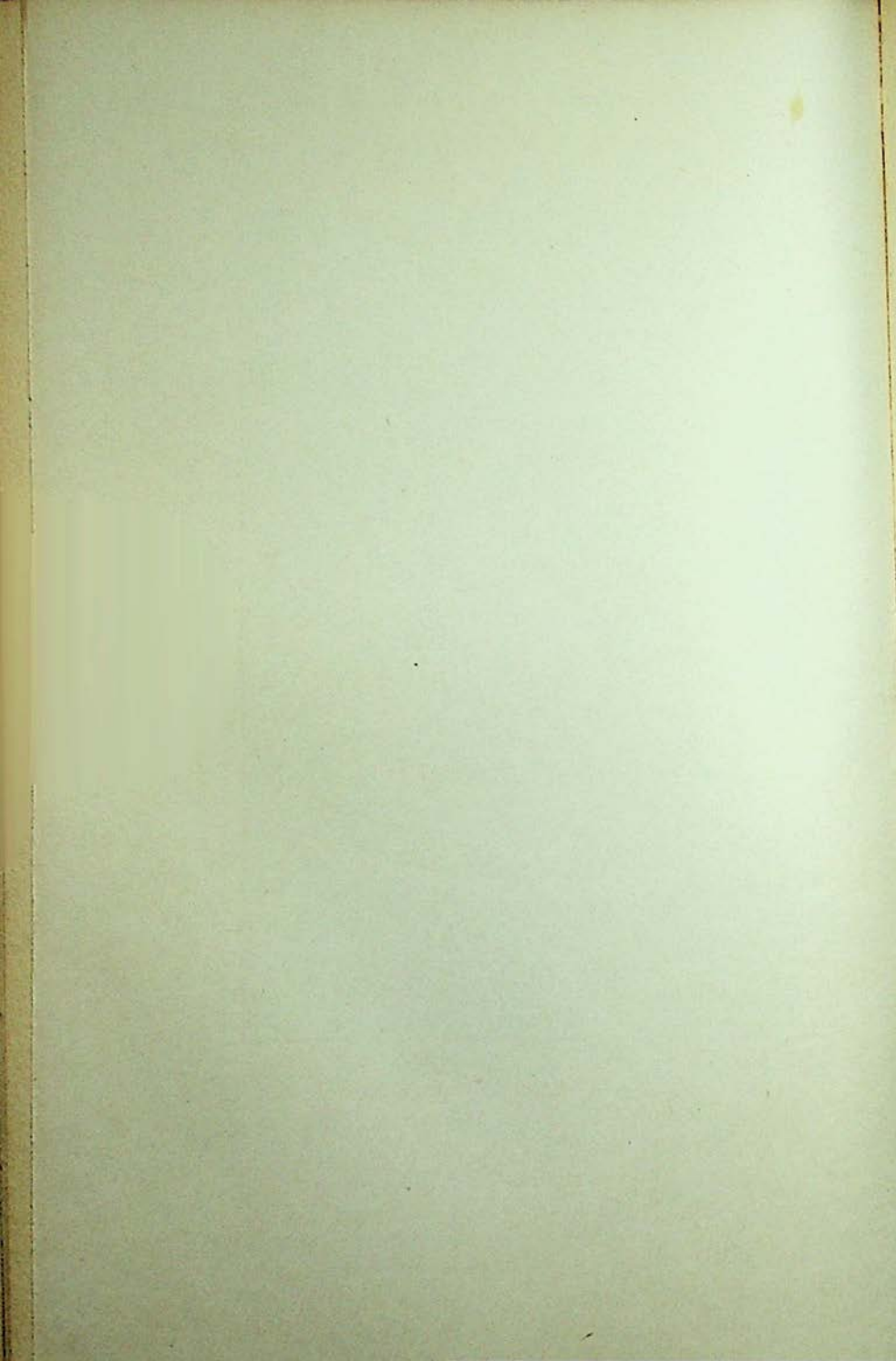
Many of the ships were built, and hailed from, Bath,





*Photograph by George Braxton*

## *THE Dreadnaught*





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Maine; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and Lynn, Salem, and Marblehead, in Massachusetts. Invariably, Captains had a share in the ships they sailed, and carried their wives with them.

The guano was very dusty, and some men could not stand the strong, ammonia smell. We called one of our men the launchman, and he had charge of a hired launch which could carry about ten tons. That, and our own longboat, which carried five tons, was the only means we had of loading our ships. For days we would not get any guano, and at the end of our first month we had received three hundred tons. It was monotonous, but, as the climate was very agreeable, I believe everyone enjoyed the rest. Our time was employed in getting ready for our trip back round Cape Horn.

Mackerel were very plentiful, and we speared them from one of our ship's boats.

Then, too, on Sunday we had regular sea lion hunts. The chief mate would go in charge of the boat, and take some of his port watch with him. The second mate would go in turn, taking some of his own starboard watch. This rivalry often caused much discussion.

Some of my readers may not know that it never rains in Peru. A very heavy dew falls at night, often equal to a Scotch mist, which is heavy enough to wet an Englishman.

One day Mr. Pilcher told me to call him when our big launch came in sight. As the launch finally came round what we called the middle island I saw at once that she carried no guano, and reported this to the mate. We could plainly see, as the launch drew nearer, that something was wrong. The launchman was sculling with a

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big oar, while two men who should have been rowing were trying to kill each other.

First a man named Bob Cameron would be on top. Then Alex Struthers would get the advantage and hammer Cameron's head against the boat's side. They quit fighting long enough to get the launch alongside, and clambered on board. After resting from their labors they started in to prove who was the best man.

They were two of our best sailors, and about equal in strength. Both the worse for liquor, and Cameron the drunker of the two.

Cameron had gotten two bottles of pisco for a shirt; and I know there is more of the devil in pisco than in any liquor I ever tasted.

Their eyes were blackened, faces bruised; they were shirtless, and covered with blood from their noses and mouths.

If any of my readers visit Peru, my advice to them is to leave pisco alone. It surely has a kick which a mule would envy.

Neither the officers nor the crew thought it advisable to interfere, so everyone found a good seat.

They fought for fully forty minutes, with bull dog courage and tenacity. At last Cameron was knocked down, and could not get up without assistance. Struthers was supposed to be the winner.

When any ship was loaded and ready to leave for Callao, a boat's crew of five or six men from several ships would go on board and assist in the heavy work. Some would man the windlass; others would get the kedge anchor on board. The ship always treated these helpers to a couple of good drinks of rum; so we were



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often chosen to assist these ships, and enjoyed the change of work; not forgetting the Jamaica rum.

It was necessary to run lines to other ships so as to warp the ship into a position where she could get "a little way on her," to avoid colliding with the other ships. Such was the crude way the old wooden ships were handled. No tugs, or steam windlasses—just the skill of the Captain on which to depend.

It was a thrilling sight to watch a skillful Captain handle his ship, and guide her out from amongst the three hundred vessels without damage. I have often seen eight ships coming or going to anchor at the same time. This was a constant source of interest.

A Russian barque of peculiar model attracted a good deal of attention. She was gracefully rounded at the bow and stern, just like an apple; and her log book showed a record of sixteen and one half knots for four consecutive days. She was only seven hundred tons register; and dainty in comparison to a powerful vessel like the *Morning Star*.

Her crew boasted that she was a wonderful boat in a heavy sea, and had come from Sydney, N. S. W., in forty-one days.

We were grateful for having so many ships lying close together, affording us amusement, and keeping us from feeling the monotony of the ninety days' waiting on cargo.

Sometimes incipient mutiny would break out on a ship. This was generally caused by officers giving the men unnecessary work to do. The sailor was usually on the losing end of the fight.

If the disturbance happened on a British ship, the

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consul was brought on board. This official tried the offenders, and his favorite sentence seemed to be a fine, with a month in jail, and two months' loss of pay.

The American consul acted differently, and accepted whatever the Captain or officers wished to claim. If a sailor was foolish enough to try and defend himself, I have heard the consul threaten not only to gag him, but have actually seen a man gagged for persisting in talking when he was told to shut up.

One day there was a fight going on aboard a ship hailing from Baltimore. The Captain had been ashore, and when he came alongside he walked up the side gangway, pulled out his revolver, and shot a sailor who was fighting with the mate. The sailor died next day.

An inquest was held, presided over by the American consul. Two American and two British Captains assisted in coming to the decision that the Captain was justified in shooting to quell a mutiny. They were both judge and jury in the Chincha Islands.

Others of the crew who, the Captain claimed, were implicated in the fray, got one month in jail with loss of pay.

Captains of ships, piloting long voyages were invested with a great deal of power; and a black look from a sailor to an officer was never tolerated, but meant an occasion for administering punishment. Brass knuckles were carried, and used, to break the spirit and crush any sign of resisting authority. The law of force, not love and goodwill, was the law of the sea.

A Captain had to be vigilant, and watch every chance to make fast time; carrying all the sail possible without endangering his masts.

The men who were assigned to the duty of going on



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the launches or longboats had to leave the ship at 6 A.M. and pull back to their ships for breakfast, which would consist of hard biscuits, and coffee which had been stewed for hours in the old pea soup pot.

The American ships would send breakfast to their men. Very often the Captain and his wife, rowed by two of the crew, would bring the breakfast.

The mate allowed me to go in the launch, and taught me how it was backed in, and the tackles hooked on to prevent the launch being wrecked in the surf. Two men were drowned one day, when the surf was heavier than usual, during our stay at the Islands.

I loved the excitement of going in the launch, and also because the American sailors often shared their breakfast with us. This was generally dry hash, browned in the pan, and rolls and butter. I thought hash a rare feast. Then the rolls—real white bread, instead of the hard pantiles on the English ships—made me wish I was an American sailor. As a rule, the American vessels gave good and just treatment to their men.

Captains of English ships were not allowed to carry their wives; and it did seem so homelike on the Yankee boats, to see the Captain's wife sitting under an awning sewing, and receiving visits from the wives of other Captains.

We had some boat racing. One ship would issue a challenge to some other ship to enter a rowing or sailing contest, which usually took place on Saturday afternoon.

The American sail boats were fitted with center-boards, and usually won, while the English and French often won in the rowing class.

The middle island of the group of three Chinchas was

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lower and flatter than the North and South Islands. There we could go alongside a little wharf, and Chinamen brought the guano in wheelbarrows to our longboat.

There was a cruel driver over every gang of twenty men. The driver was armed with a revolver, and used a whip with a lash which was at least twenty feet long. With a curse, he would swing the lash and reach the back of a coolie, as well as his legs. The lash often got tangled in the Chinaman's legs and tripped him. It was then used to make him rise quickly. There was a stubborn streak in the Chinamen, and they would not move a bit faster, no matter how much the driver used the whip.

Many of the poor contract slaves ended it all by jumping off the cliffs. Their mangled bodies were often found washing around in the surf.

The brutality made a deep impression on my mind, as well as the foolishness and lack of business sense displayed, which I could never understand. The unresisting attitude and the total indifference of the Chinamen seemed to make the drivers crazy. There did not seem to be anyone around to stop the wholesale waste of human material. The coolies were, after all, children of our Heavenly Father, like ourselves.

Just to show how crude were the methods used by Captains in handling money, I will relate what happened aboard a ship belonging in Salem, Massachusetts.

The Captain was called to Callao on business, leaving eight thousand five hundred dollars aboard in a small safe. His wife was on the ship, and he considered his money quite safe in her care. Upon his return from Callao he found that his wife, the mate, and the steward were missing. He asked his second mate where they had



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gone, and was told that they had taken the sailing pinnacle on the previous morning, leaving the ship in charge of the second mate.

The Captain was about sixty years of age, and full of vim. He saw a Baltimore clipper just leaving the Islands for Callao, and, getting passage on her, was in Callao in twenty hours.

He had no difficulty in locating the fugitives; and saved nearly all the money. The mate and steward were put in jail for a month, and were then thrown out to shift for themselves.

Jack Brett and his gang got hold of them, and put them on a ship. They had only one suit of clothes with which to make the passage around Cape Horn, having three months' advance to work off.

The Captain's wife was only twenty-two years old, and I never heard the explanation she gave her husband, but he brought her back to his ship. It was a case of June and December, and the mate was a young chap who had been making love to her for many months. Scandals were popular even in the old clipper days!

The storage of guano is most unpleasant, and the ammonia smell in the hold was unendurable to some. Lynch and Richie had charge of the bagging, and because I could breathe quite freely they gave me the job of holding the bags open while the men filled. A glass of rum twice a day was the reward we got for being able to stand the fumes of ammonia. Lynch would do anything for a glass of liquor. I met him years later when he was mate of a banana steamer, and found his love for rum as strong as ever. Perhaps we all cultivated a craving for it down in the hold of the *City of Montreal*.

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On the quiet, it was real good stuff, and worth its weight in gold when served out to us after coming off a topsail yard where we had been for two hours trying to reef a topsail that was frozen stiff, and a northwest wind blowing through our scanty clothes.

When we were loaded down to the mark placed on us by the Peruvian authorities, it was a happy day for us all. Now we were homeward bound, and with the help of a visiting crew we took up our anchors and hoisted the topsails.

The favorite chanty songs were sung—"Reuben Ranso," and "Blow, Boys; Blow." Through the mists of sixty-three years I can picture the lively scene of leaving the Chincha Islands. One of the sailors was perched on the rail, singing the lines of the chanties, while the rest of us joined in the chorus. We all needed the inspiration of music while the men yanked the topsail up with a stronger pull.

Our steward served rum twice, and gave good tots, glasses filled to the brim, keeping everybody in good humor. The visitors left us in their boats, after giving three rousing cheers for the *City of Montreal*.

*Those were days to be remembered, when our good ship  
sailed away  
From the old port behind us, to Calcutta, or Bombay;  
When we sold the heathen nations rum, and opium in rolls,  
And the missionaries went along, to save their sinful souls.*

The next day we arrived in Callao, where I received comforting letters from home, along with one from the Aulds.



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I was continually comparing the attitude of Susan toward me, and how lavish she was with her love, with the shyness and reticence of the girl in Glasgow. I was young and foolish, but had sense enough to prefer the reserve of the girl I longed to win some day.

The day after our arrival in Callao, the port watch, to which I belonged, were given twenty-four hours' leave. All the sailors had money advanced by the Captain, and this was deducted from their wages at the end of the voyage. I received only one dollar, but the boatswain and the carpenter took me with them to Lima, about thirteen miles from Callao, where we dined, and had excellent coffee, served in tiny china cups. The old Catholic Cathedral gave us a thrill, and, while I have been in churches, both Catholic and Protestant, which were more artistically decorated, and have more beautiful paintings, I have never seen so much gold and silver.

The solid gold and silver pillars were cold and lifeless, but as in Mexico, a large percentage of the peasant class could not read, and the bright metals must have made a sacred impression.

I thought, as I walked through this Cathedral, that it needed cleaning out with plenty of sand and holystones, such as were used on the *City of Montreal's* decks, and with a good stream of water from the deck hose, this would make the old place fit to worship in.

But I was only a boy, and did not appreciate what Peruvians considered the finest thing they had on exhibition.

We wandered around, trying to see all the sights, and upon reaching the wharf sat down and waited for our boat to take us aboard. Our carpenter was very much

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of a family man and did not want to stay ashore all night. The boatswain wanted to save his wages, so he could marry a girl in Melbourne and since I had no money, we were reconciled to leave all those who had made up their minds to sleep ashore to their own devices.

I did not really want to go on board, as I was anxious to spend all the time I could clear of the ship's discipline; but I was in charge of the boatswain, and he was very solicitous that I should not get into any mischief. I was wishing that something would happen when I spied my friend Willie Robertson coming down the plank. That he had been drinking was very evident, and seemed bent on mischief. When sober, Willie was very gentle and quiet, but in his cups was liable to be noisy and full of devilment.

The boatswain and the carpenter told him to sit down, and go on board with us, but just as our boat was approaching, Willie ran up toward the street. Running after him, I at once made up my mind to get clear of the boatswain and enjoy a few more hours' liberty.

Willie had one dollar left of his liberty money, and treated me to a glass of wine. He drank pisco. We sauntered along the main thoroughfare, and kept out of trouble for some time, I pleading with Willie to walk straight, and keeping a grip on his arm. I can see him now, very short and stout, the makings of a real old shellback, whose outstanding failing was an appetite for liquor. He was apt to strike out at anyone whose appearance he did not like; and my wish for excitement was soon gratified. An officer of the police force pointed his finger at us and ordered two of his men to arrest us. We were not doing a thing to disturb the peace, and, as the



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officer could see, one was only a young boy. The idea was that our Captain would not sail without us, and the town would be enriched by fining us.

The officer left us in charge of the two policemen, who were rigged like soldiers, and carried guns with bayonets fixed. I was mad clear through, and, as we walked along toward the jail, felt like doing something to obtain my freedom. The jail must have been some distance away, and outside the town. The men who had us in charge were no taller than myself, and undersized in every way. Willie was fast losing the use of his legs, and his captor had a hard job to keep him going. My first thought was to hit the policeman on the jaw, and run back toward the harbor. I kept thinking of what the mate would do to me, and then again I might never see my ship.

The disgrace, and the injustice, of the whole thing, made me desperate and ugly. I was confident that I could win in a fist fight with the policeman, and get away before he could shoot me, but there was the other one who could let Willie fall, and very likely shoot me. We were going down a short, steep hill, when I pretended to stumble, and succeeded in knocking my captor's heels together with such force that he fell against Willie and his policeman, while his rifle went quite a way down the hill. We four went down in a heap, and both cops grabbed me. Alas, my dream of liberty was ended, and, while my policeman did not fully realize that I had tripped him intentionally, he seemed to have many doubts. They both prodded me with the butts of their guns, and to strike terror into me, gave me one prick with the bayonet.

Willie refused to get up, and my policeman escorted me to the jail, and pushed me into a big room, among a

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crowd of the most degraded human beings I have ever seen in one bunch.

In about half an hour Willie was brought along, supported by the two policemen. The room was about fifty feet long, and forty wide. There were about thirty-five prisoners, and many of them were half breeds, a mixture of Peruvian, Spanish, and Indian extraction. Some looked half Indian and half Negro. How I longed for my bunk, with its donkey's breakfast for a mattress, on the *City of Montreal*.

I had been wishing for something to happen, but here I was dazed and out of joint.

Well, I was alive, and the youth in me kept excusing myself for deliberately making things happen. It grew dark, the big cell was lighted by four small, smoky lamps. Some of the prisoners had loaves of dark bread, but no supper was served to us. Willie was in the land of Nod, and I envied him his freedom from the worry that bothered me.

The toilet conveniences were very crude, and how anyone could live for even a day in such an atmosphere was beyond my comprehension. The stench from four wooden receptacles, one in each corner of the room, without covers, was sickening.

There were two sets of old-fashioned stocks in the middle of the cell, which were used for confining unruly prisoners.

About eight o'clock a man was thrown into our midst who proved to be an American sailor who must have been bumming on the beach, or connected with the boarding house crimps. He had cultivated a fighting jag, and boasted that he could fight his weight in wild cats. He



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wore fine clothes, but took coat and vest, and even his shirt, off, to allow more freedom of action in fighting anyone in the room.

Four burly negroes picked the American up and carried him to the stocks, while the room was filled with profane echoes.

I sat on the floor, close to the stocks, but kept out of Jim's reach, as I was using his clothes to sit on.

When he tired of cursing the gang that put him in the stocks he asked me to help him get his legs free. I gained his confidence by pretending to help him, and found out that he came from the old North End of Boston.

I did not sleep that night, and was glad to see the light of another day trying to penetrate the darkness of that awful dungeon.

About nine A.M. Willie and I were taken into a court room. A judge listened to the policemen tell, I suppose, what hard cases we were. We were not questioned, or given any chance to defend ourselves. We never knew what crimes we were charged with, as Spanish, or Peruvian, was the only language used.

I heard the judge say, "Fifteen soles." A sole was worth five shillings. I was down on the articles for a shilling a month, and I fully expected to make the voyage in sixteen months; therefore the ship would owe me sixteen shillings at the end of our trip.

How I was going to get out of the mess was beyond my comprehension. The policeman seemed to be trying to impress on the judge that I was the bad one. We were hustled back to our dungeon.

Willie Robertson was wishing for a hair of the dog that bit him so badly, and was the cause of all our trouble.

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His four years' apprenticeship expired while we were loading at the Chinchas, so he was rated, and entitled to seaman's wages. It would be easy to collect from him, but what about me?

I imagined that people might think that I must have been drunk, and how could I prove it untrue? Perhaps the Captain would leave me in jail, and make out to my folks at home that I was not worth paying a fine?

When I started out to enjoy my liberty day, everything was bright—I would soon be on my way home to my loved ones. But what a change in twenty-four hours.

I was hungry, and sleepy, and just a broken-hearted boy who needed to be comforted. I felt sure of a rope's ending from the mate, if ever I got back on the *City of Montreal*.

About 10 A.M. I noticed our Captain coming along, wearing his familiar tall hat, and I was mighty glad to see his tanned face and long black beard. I shall never forget the stern way he looked at me, while a clerk told him how much we were fined, and what desperadoes we were, adding that the policeman that arrested me received a bad cut on his leg, and was badly bruised.

The clerk was the only one who could speak English, and he used it to blackguard me. I was furious over the whole business, and, if I had been given a good breakfast, would have tried to make something happen to that clerk. Here I was herded with murderers and thieves, degraded and fined, yet I had broken no law, nor merited the injustice. Suffering was mine!

We were taken back to the cell, while Captain Biggam went into town for money to pay our fine. Upon his return we were told to follow him down to the ship's



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boat, amid jeers and much laughter. Everybody was on hand to receive us, and with shame and humiliation I faced the crew.

There he stood—our mate, waiting at the top of the gangway with the piece of famous rope! Slowness of movement was my salvation until on a level with the main chains, to which the main rigging is secured, when I got busy and climbed up the chains, then up the main rigging, and, for the time being, was out of the mate's clutches.

I climbed into the main top and rested. The mate pretended to be wild at me, but being human, he admired the way I had outwitted him. The boatswain came up to bring me down, but as he neared me, I kept climbing until I reached the top-gallant yard. He was persistent, so I got hold of the stay that led to the fore topmast and got away from him. The mate became frightened and called him down.

I was really more anxious to know what the mate was doing with Willie, and, to my surprise, he only scolded him. I found out afterward that Willie's station of able seaman on liberty, made him free to spend his time ashore as he saw fit.

When the carpenter, boatswain, and cook were told by Willie that I had eaten no food since I had lunch in Lima, they urged the mate to call me down from my perch.

He used some very choice language in conveying to me the idea that, for the present, I was not to be flogged. "Oh yes," he said, "I will attend to you later, you drunken young bugger." He had tied up my dog, in preparation for a flogging, but he now released him.

My cup of woe was running over, but I believe that if

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the mate had come nearer to me I would have taken a bite out of some part of him. But, my old dog cuddled up to me, and a feeling of sympathy and faith crept through me.

I crawled down to the deck, tears streaming down my cheeks from pure grief and rage. As Harry Lauder puts it, "I was sorry for masel'." The first one to show me any sympathy was my Manilla shipmate, who came and put his hand on my shoulder as I sat on a spar by the ship's rail and said, "No cry." Joe Blair, the cook, spoke kindly to me, and invited me to a good meal, including pudding and cheese. I was beginning to have a new outlook on life. The tears glistening in the coal black eyes of my Manilla friend did me more good than even the dainty bits.

The boatswain asked me, "What happened when you ran up the wharf after Willie?" I told him the truth, owned up to taking one glass of wine, and that I had been jailed for doing nothing. He listened carefully, but when I was foolish enough to tell him about tripping up the cop, that spoiled my case. He freely predicted that I would get hung some day for doing nothing.

The starboard watch were ashore on liberty the day I got out of jail. Very few came back that night, but all returned before noon the next day. From their stories, they must have had a hilarious time, and finished up by fighting the port watch of an English ship. However, everyone arrived safely on board without being arrested, though a few had black eyes and bruised faces. They seemed satisfied that they had received their money's worth out of the costs of liberty day.

Whenever the various members of the crew were telling



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how they spent their liberty night, I was always an eager listener, but was often ordered to "clear out," to protect my morals.

One of the men we called "Belfast," told how he enjoyed watching the thimble riggers, and thought it easy to guess what cup the pea was under, and thus increase his store of liberty money. But he lost two soles, equal to ten shillings, leaving enough money to get drunk, and to sleep on the beach all night.

Some of the starboard watch had paired off, and walked around town, waiting for the flutter of a handkerchief in the hand of some young lady. Stranraer did not want to be hampered with a chum, and decided to take the risk of seeking pleasure alone. It was a risk to go without a chum, as many of the girls who flirted, and courted the company of sailors, had men folks who were very handy with a knife.

Bill said that he had no trouble whatever, and enjoyed every minute of his liberty day.

He was invited into a home, where they treated him very kindly.

Of course he was young, only twenty, full of life and fun, and, being good-looking, the ladies naturally were attracted to him.

He said there were three women in the house, the oldest about fifty, one about thirty-five, and the youngest about seventeen. The youngest called the old lady "Mater."

Bill came to the conclusion that he had three generations on his hands.

After being served wine, he decided to await developments, and enjoy what fell to his lot.

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A man suddenly opened the door, and the old lady pushed him out into the street.

The door was locked against all intruders, and, after drinking two bottles of wine, and laughing over the mistakes they made trying to talk English, the old woman became sleepy and retired to a small room, adjoining the large and only other room in the house.

The mother and daughter asked Bill how much money he had, so he fished out two dollars and divided it between them. Bill enjoyed a nice supper of fish, cooked in a very tasty way, and also helped the ladies to drink two bottles of wine. Then his lodging for the night, added to all that went with it, made Bill come to the conclusion that he had been treated very fairly. He was also pleased that there was not a trace of jealousy in the mother when he paid more attention to the daughter.

Some of the starboard watch had met with varied experiences, but Stranraer Bill's yarn is a sample of the morals and loose living that was prevalent in the part of Callao frequented by sailors in 1866. How nice it would have been to have had a shelter like the mission on Catherine Street, New York City. With three hundred ships loading at the Chinchas, two-thirds of them under the American and British flags, it would have been an investment sure to pay large dividends.

Ship owners did not have common business sense enough to look after even the material needs of their crews. When leaving for distant ports, if they had taken aboard sufficient potatoes to last only one month, scurvy would have been kept away. A Captain could not make time with, perhaps, half a dozen men laid up with scurvy.



## *Waterfront Señoritas in Callao*

If the moral welfare of the sailors had been looked after the Captain would not have had so many men sick and unfit for duty from diseases contracted by intercourse with the low characters that are waiting around "liberty day."

All these wrongs are brought about through man's inhumanity to the men who do the hard work.

Of course, it was the old idea that it was not possible to run a ship on Christian principles, that sailors were a bad lot, that the sailor who had no home restraints was master and guide of his own pathway through life, when he followed, as I did, the sea at an early age.

It was a miracle if a sailor didn't go astray.

Thank God, we are living in a better day, and ship-owners have learned that they are their brothers' keepers.

Very few are around now who lived and sailed under the conditions about which I am writing.

When a sailor had scurvy his legs, below the knee, would turn a brownish black, and if a finger was pressed on the flesh a dent would be left. Then, as the disease progressed, the gums became soft and spongy, and the teeth became loose. A person having scurvy for five or six weeks was left in a very pitiable condition. Strange to say, it is a disease from which one can quickly recover, as two weeks ashore, on a vegetable diet, is sufficient to cure most cases.

A ship might be five months on a passage from Callao, and, of course, more from Frisco, and if they had a spell of easterly wind would be six months, so that many sailors just wasted away and died. Their shipmates could do nothing for them but give them what care and comfort

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

lay in their power. A very offensive odor exuded from the bodies of scurvy cases, but I never heard the well members of the crew complain, or propose that they should be isolated from the fore-castle.



## CHAPTER V

### *Homeward Bound Round Cape Horn*

WE were in the southeast trades on October sixteenth, 1866, as we left Callao, bound to Queens-town for orders. The southeast trades disappeared in latitude  $25^{\circ}$  south, and we had a spell of light, variable winds. The ship had accumulated a coating of barnacles which made her sluggish and slow.

We were off Cape Horn on November twenty-first, nearly midsummer in that latitude. We had daylight twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four, and enjoyed a close view of the Cape. In winter we would have given it a wide berth, on account of the continuous gales and bitter cold that makes it the hardest Cape to manipulate. Many of the old sailing ships left their bones around that coast, with not a chance of saving a soul.

I have mentioned a member of our crew named Charlie McBride, a boxer. He had a nasty disposition, and liked to annoy me.

One day I lost my temper and, regardless of consequences, hit him on the mouth with all the strength I could muster, drawing blood and loosening one of his teeth. He did not strike back, knowing that some of the men would take my part, but called me all sorts of names.

A few days afterward, McBride gave Harry Lynch a drive in the ribs with his elbow. He called Harry a foul name, and claimed he had knocked his leg with the broom. Harry tried to hit him, but he dodged the blow. The

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

second mate quieted the row, and made them stick to their work.

That night, Harry was sitting on his sea chest, close by the forecastle door, when Paddy Duffy pinioned Lynch's arms behind, and McBride pounded Harry's face with a pair of brass knuckles. Then McBride jumped out on deck and called on Harry to come out and fight.

The brass knuckles were not in evidence, but Harry's face was never put into that condition with the bare fists. Lynch was a harmless fellow, and very good natured. His nose had been fractured, and it was three weeks before his face got well. Bob Cameron was ailing, and had slight symptoms of scurvy. He told McBride that if he was in good health he would fix him. Alex Struthers, Bob Cameron's old opponent, seemed to be the one who would punish McBride. Alex kept silent, and McCluskey quietly took off his jumper, then his shirt, and told McBride to get ready for a licking. McBride stripped, and at it they went.

The Captain and the man at the wheel were the only ones who were not enjoying the fight. Both mates were there, and it was easily seen that McCluskey was the man they wanted to win.

McBride told McCluskey that he was the one who would be licked, and, for the first fifteen minutes of the fight, it did look bad for Jamie. One of his eyes closed, but he kept on bravely.

McCluskey knew how to box a little, but his stout heart won the fight. Knocked down several times, he kept at it until McBride gradually weakened.

They fought for forty minutes, when McCluskey finally



## *Homeward Bound Round Cape Horn*

hit McBride a knockout under the chin. Duffy was the only one who made any effort to assist McBride.

Mr. Pilcher, the chief mate, asked me to his room every afternoon when it was our watch below, and taught me navigation. I was quick at learning, and could easily have passed for second mate as far as navigating a vessel was concerned when we arrived in Scotland.

Captain Biggam had shipped two men in place of the two we lost from the fore-topsail yard. They were put on board by Jack Brett and his gang with three months' wages, at thirty dollars per month, charged against them, which would be paid to the boarding house keeper as soon as we sailed.

Neither of these men were much real help working the ship. I suppose they thought that working for three months for nothing, gave them an excuse for shirking. One of them was very bad with scurvy for six weeks before we landed, and the other was just out of the hospital after treatment for a horrible disease he had contracted through consorting with the vile women on the Callao waterfront.

We crossed the equator on January seventeenth, 1867, and had a spell of calm weather for a week before we sailed into the northeast trade wind.

Two turtles were caught one day which made a very welcome change of diet. The salt beef was like mahogany in texture, and some of the pork barrels had leaked, and the meat had become rusty, yet we had to eat it or starve.

While drifting along between the trades with light, variable winds, we nearly lost Thompson, one of our best men. He fell overboard, from the knight heads, which was the only toilet provided for the sailors.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The second mate saw him as the ship slowly moved along, and after throwing a life buoy, ordered the gig lowered. Fortunately, it was hanging by the tackles, and two men were getting it ready for painting.

All hands were soon on deck, and the main yard was thrown aback. When the boat reached the vicinity of Thompson, and the crew were trying to get him into the gig, Hugh Ross hollered, "There is a shark's fin just astern of the gig."

The two men who were in the boat had Thompson by the arms and were trying to get the life buoy over his head, when the shark bit off the poor fellow's left foot.

The second mate had noticed the shark, and stood ready to jab him with a boat hook. However, he had to stay in the bow of the boat to balance against the weight of the two men and Thompson in the stern. But the officer successfully drove the boat hook into the shark's neck and probably saved Thompson's life.

The boat was alongside in about three minutes. A tourniquet was applied, and everything done that was possible to alleviate the pain. They gave Thompson an opiate, and were unsparing with the rum.

The wind died down after we hoisted the gig and secured it. Someone suggested fishing for shark, and persuaded the steward to give us a piece of pork for bait.

The line was not in the water three minutes when two hungry sharks were seen astern. One immediately swallowed the bait, and struggled, but the boatswain handled the line like a master and skillfully directed the men in the hauling.

The shark was a monster, nearly fourteen feet long,



## *Homeward Bound Round Cape Horn*

and proved to be the one that had bitten off Thompson's foot.

No time was lost in ripping him open, and this was some job. A twelve foot long scantling, and two hand-spikes were rammed down his throat to keep him still, while we hunted for Jack's foot.

The force and quickness that the shark displayed was marvelous. With one flip of his tail he broke two stanchions of the pin rail that went round the main mast, while the Captain scolded the chief mate for hauling such a brute aboard.

Unfortunately we did not find Jack's foot intact, as the shark had badly damaged it. All hands had to cut the animal up and make his bulk small enough to throw overboard.

We ran into the northeast trades a few hours afterward, then we felt that at last we were really homeward bound.

I have seldom seen it fail in my experience that bad weather always follows the killing of a shark. We had a heavy squall and a deluge of rain that filled the decks faster than the scuppers could take it away. We filled our water casks and everything else that would hold water, and all hands had a good wash.

A large ship came along, flying the American flag, which proved to be the fast clipper *Glory of the Seas*. She passed so closely that we could read her name on the quarter. Greetings were exchanged and the signal flags told us she was from New York, bound for Frisco.

Her crew were hoisting a topsail, and we could plainly hear her sailors singing the old chanty song:

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

*I think I heard our old man say  
Whiskey, Johnny?  
I'll treat my men in a decent way  
O, whiskey for my Johnny!*

As the wind was light we observed the sailors on the *Glory of the Seas* pulling on the braces after the topsail was hoisted, and heard them sing another old sea song:

*The ship she's a sailing out over the bar  
Away Rio! Away Rio!  
The ship she's a sailing out over the bar  
We're bound to the Rio Grande.*

Within a short time, only the lofty masts of the *Glory of the Seas* were visible on the horizon. It cheered us all, however, to be so close to the American ship, and hear other voices singing, as we were not so cheerful on our ship.

Losing Jack Thompson's weight when pulling and hauling, along with Bob Cameron laid up, and three more men showing symptoms of scurvy, made the outlook rather depressing. I, personally, had no responsibility, and welcomed unusual happenings which would satisfy my longing for change and adventure.

We were unable to lay our course in the northeast trades, therefore we were much further to the westward when free of the trades than we would have been if the wind had been fair. This condition made the distance traversed much longer. We passed the Azores Islands during the month of February, which is noted for bad weather in this vicinity, and experienced a succession of gales, amounting sometimes to hurricane force.



## *Homeward Bound Round Cape Horn*

We had five men on the sick list, including Jack Thompson, who was still suffering a great deal of pain. Fortunately, he was not married, and had no one depending on him. There would be no work for a one legged sailor.

There was still left someone who was always ready to sing a chanty song while hoisting the sails, or at the pumps, as the ship leaked considerably in bad weather.

On February twenty-first, four months and five days after leaving Peru, we were in sight of the entrance to Queenstown Harbor. Everybody was in good humor, expecting to be in harbor that afternoon. The Captain, with his telescope, made out a pilot sloop coming out to assist and bring us orders for delivery of our cargo.

The wind had been moderate from the southwest when we first sighted the pilot boat, but shifted to the northwest, which made a head wind into the harbor of Queenstown. The wind kept increasing, and the pilot sloop suddenly tacked, and beat its way back into the harbor.

It was a bitter disappointment to all, especially to our sick ones.

We kept tacking ship, trying to keep as closely as possible to our destination, hoping that the wind would change and bring our pilot next morning.

By midnight we had only the three lower topsails set, with the wind increasing to gale force. In the morning watch all hands were called on deck, and the fore and mizzen topsails were clewed up, taking every ounce of strength for the few men left to stow one topsail at a time.

The northwest wind was very cold, and I was frozen, as we were working up on the topsail yards for at least two hours.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

There were holes in my pants, and I was barefooted, yet I kept cheerful and hopeful that I would get safely home. I was the only one in the crew who was not afflicted with salt water boils, which helped me to stand the hard, bitter weather.

Some of the old hands were very despondent, and our failure to get into Queenstown made them worse. We were making leeway all the time, and some of the men said we would be wrecked if the Captain did not abandon his efforts to reach Queenstown. They claimed that the proper thing to do was to run up St. George Channel to Holy Head.

About 8 P.M., just thirty-six hours since our hopes were shattered, Hugh Ross, with his sharp eyes, discovered a bright light to leeward. The crew were nearly all on the lee side of the quarter deck, and when the Captain, with his glasses, was able to identify the light as the South Stack Lighthouse, our hopes of ever reaching port grew very dim.

We attempted to set the fore staysail, but it was blown clean out the bolt ropes. Then we tried to wear ship, that is, to get her before the wind, and get on the other tack, keeping clear of that rock bound coast.

The sheet block of the fore staysail, slashing around, struck Pat Duffy, and over the side he went, as the ship came up in the wind.

If the fore staysail had held we would have been all right.

Some of us were sent down to the sail locker to get out a fore royal sail, and were ordered to take it up the weather lower rigging on the foremast. I was able to help unroll it, a little at a time, and, with plenty of rat-



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line wound round the shrouds and the sail, we were able to get most of the royal exposed to the gale.

Mr. Cook, our strong and healthy second mate, was the leader along with the boatswain, and this manœuvre was all that saved the *City of Montreal*.

The South Stack Light seemed to be shining directly on us when the ship paid off before the wind, and the Captain concluded, when he got her on the other tack, that he would run for Holy Head, and not take any more risks.

I was sorry for Captain Biggam while all this was going on. Losing another man would not add to his reputation, and failure in making Queenstown would not be a compliment. He knew that the officers and crew thought him very unwise in not running up Channel twelve hours sooner. He had risked the loss of his ship and all hands.

We all got a tot of rum, and the cook was able to make coffee.

I want to say right here that Joe Blair worked hard in getting the royal spread in the fore rigging, and was one of the few men we had who was free from boils, and able to help save the ship and our lives.

As we neared Holy Head our Captain thought it best, on account of the sick men, to keep right on for Liverpool. He probably decided that the owners could arrange with the firm that owned the guano to have the ship discharge in Liverpool.

We secured a pilot, and anchored in the Mersey, the Captain going ashore to make arrangements for the sick men.

It was pitiful to see Jack Thompson lowered over the

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

ship's side, maimed for life. However, he did not let anyone know how he felt about his misfortune. "Good-bye, boys," he cried; "thank you for being so good to me; I am going to have a run around the beach."

Since I began to write about the old wooden sailing ships I have entered my eightieth year, but the joy and happiness still lingers that possessed me that day.

The quietness that pervaded the ship lying at anchor, the strange sights, the fresh meat and potatoes, and loaf bread, all combined to make me very happy. I had been wishing so long for what was only the common food of shore folks, and my longing invested these things with values they did not really possess.

We were only in Liverpool three days when the Captain told the chief mate we were ordered to Leith, on the East coast of Scotland. The shortest direction was by the northern route; through the Irish Sea, and north channel between Scotland and Ireland, and then thread our way through numerous islands off the Scottish coast. The Captain was advised by the owners to go this way.

We left Liverpool on the second of March, ready to go, and grateful for having a good, warm, dry sleep.

Many of my readers have heard of a steamship called the *Great Eastern*. She was built for carrying passengers from Great Britain to America. She was rigged with seven masts, and was a wonder for size. However, she was a failure in the passenger trade, because she consumed too much coal, and rolled and tumbled around so strenuously that people refused to be entertained. She was used while laying the Atlantic Cable, and finally ended her days as a coal hulk in Gibraltar.



## *Homeward Bound Round Cape Horn*

The *Great Eastern* passed us on her way out to sea, and I had a good look at the monster.

I remember seeing a steamer called the *Peruvian*, belonging to our owners. She was also new, and was considered quite up to date.

The money we made, and the hardships we endured on the old *City of Montreal* were building these steamers.

I did not write to my folks in Glasgow, as I didn't have any writing material, but they knew that we were safe in Liverpool, and bound for Leith.

It was a cold, dreary passage of thirteen days to Leith. The cook's kettle had scalded my feet while I was trying to get warm, making me unable to do my share of work.

We had six men out of the Allan Line shore gang to replace our sick men who were put ashore in Liverpool.

After standing off and on for a day, we secured a pilot to take us through the Pentland Firth. The weather was so rough, when we got through, that we could not land him, so he came with us to Leith.

The men were paid off, and though the mate did not want me to leave, I claimed my freedom from "bound apprenticeship," and took my discharge.

I was on the articles for one shilling per month, and received sixteen shillings for the voyage. Who paid the fifteen soles I was fined in Callao? Who cared?

A junk dealer came on board and I had the privilege of selling all the old clothes left in the forecastle.

The sailors were gay, and gave me a few shillings. My friend from Manilla handed me ten.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Aggie Said, "I Love You, Bob"*

I FINALLY collected my few duds, and took the train for Glasgow, forty-five miles from Leith. Someone had been at the station to meet me every day for a week, but my two sisters were the lucky ones.

They hailed a cab and took me home, to be hugged and kissed and wept over, as I recounted all the narrow escapes. Every visitor had to hear about my being washed overboard, and, in some miraculous way, swept back onto the ship. How I did enjoy the loving and the petting of the home folks!

My parents wished me to become an engineer and stay at home. The chances of the sea were bringing a great worry into Mother's heart and she begged me not to follow such a dangerous calling.

The love of adventure was in my blood, and to sea I was bound to go. My Father persuaded me to go into an engineering firm and give it a trial for a few months, but the hankering for change still possessed me.

I left the *City of Montreal* in March, and in September Captain Flarty, whose wife was an old friend of my Mother's, was sent to Quebec to bring the *Curlew*, a new ship, to Liverpool. I applied for a berth with him as ordinary seaman, and went to Liverpool in November and signed the articles for a voyage to New Orleans, to load cotton. My wages were thirty shillings per month.

The ship was owned by the firm of Pollok & Gilmour,



## Aggie Said, "I Love You, Bob"

whose houseflag was blue with the letters P and G in yellow. The sailors claimed that these letters stood for "Poverty and Grief." This proved to be true, as they did not believe in overfeeding, and put on board only enough provisions to comply with the law. There was no butter, or tinned soup and bouilli, such as we had enjoyed on Sundays in the *City of Montreal*, and the ship-owners were getting good freights, as a great many American ships had been sunk by the *Alabama* and the *Shenandoah*, Southern privateers during the Civil War.

The *Curlew* was getting two pounds twelve shillings for carrying a five hundred pound bale of cotton from New Orleans to Liverpool. Of course the ship had to pay for screwing the cotton in, and also for unloading it.

There was no sailors' union in the days about which I am writing, and man's inhumanity to man was countenanced by the British Board of Trade. I hope I am not tiring my readers by attempting to describe what a changed world we are living in.

Today, in the American Shipping Board ships, the crew would put up a loud howl if they did not have grapefruit for breakfast.

But the Shipping Board ships are supported by the public purse, and such steamships as the *Leviathan* will run in debt to the tune of \$750,000 per year.

The old wooden and iron and steel ships earned the money that built such ships as the *Mauretania* and the *Majestic*.

The trip to New Orleans was uneventful. Captain Flarty went far enough south to get into the northeast trades, which carried him safely through the Caribbean Sea and into the Gulf of Mexico.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The weather was warm and glorious, and as we passed close to the Island of Montserrat, which seemed to be clothed in a dark green verdure, right down to the water's edge, I thought, "What a difference between this kind of sailing and the passage on the *City of Montreal*, especially from the Western Islands to Leith."

I was very much interested in the American brigantines that were used in the West India trade. One in particular, had a lower and topmast stunsail set on her foremast. The breeze was fairly strong, and our ship was going twelve knots per hour, keeping the saucy little brigantine just ahead of us, and playing around, nearly under our bows, we fancied that her Captain was saying, "Come on, you big limejuicer; as small as I am, I can outsail you!"

The breeze kept on freshening, and the pretty little brigantine was forced to take in the stunsails. She was so close that we could see every movement of her crew.

While the breeze grew stronger, our Captain ordered the stunsails taken in, while the brigantine lowered his royal yard, and shortly afterward concluded it was best to clew it up and furl it. He also hauled down his top-gallant staysail, and slowly dropped astern.

It was like a panorama to see the gallant fight the little vessel made. The chief mate hove the log, and we were making a little over thirteen and a half knots.

I enjoyed this trip immensely, as we had a good crew, and no growlers. Our Captain was a gentleman, and rarely used profane language!!

We arrived at the mouth of the Mississippi in thirty-eight days, and were taken in tow by a paddle wheel steamer. At night we had to run a hawser out and hitch



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it to a large tree, and thus moor the ship, while the steamer lay alongside.

I was curious to know where the steamer was built, and found, by going down in her engine-room, that the steamer *Heroine* was built by A. & G. Inglis, in Glasgow, Scotland. I asked the mate how the *Heroine* had gotten into the towboat class, and he said that she was a very successful blockade runner, carrying cotton from Southern ports to England, but had been captured in January, 1865, by a vessel belonging to the North. As the *Heroine* had at that time a speed of sixteen knots, very few vessels were able to chase her successfully, but her engines had broken down, and she had been dethroned.

Next morning we proceeded to discharge our ballast of seven hundred tons of salt.

Gangs of men prepared the ship ready for stowing cotton, and I was chosen by the Captain to receive the merchandise, and count it as it came down in drays, hauled by mules. I had to mark a large "C" on the burlap, so as to be sure that the two ships lying outside did not get any of our cotton.

A ship named *Ailsa*, belonging to the owners of the *Curlew*, lay outside of us. Her Captain when going ashore one morning discovered an old woman picking up pieces of cotton that fell out of the bales. He told Captain Flarty that she was tearing handfuls out of the bales, and putting them in her bag.

Captain Flarty informed our chief mate that I should not allow anyone to rob the bales. I was suspicious of the Captain of the *Ailsa*, and knew that he was the one who had reported me.

I had become quite friendly with the old woman who

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claimed our wharf as part of the territory belonging to her. She was Irish, and a scrapper.

She came along one day and found a young German woman picking up cotton on our wharf, and ordered her off. The young woman argued she had as good a right to the waste as the Irish woman, and then the fight started.

My Irish friend did nearly all the fighting, and was summoned to court, calling me as a witness. I claimed she was an angel, and she was found not guilty, amid great rejoicing. I was taken to the Irish woman's home, and nothing was too good for the sailor, "Bob."

I had a chum about eighteen years of age, a native of the town of Largs (also the home of Captain Flarty), who was inclined to be consumptive, and the Captain had shipped him as an ordinary seaman, with the duty of night watch. He told me that the Captain of the *Ailsa* had just bought a fancy rooster, and kept it abaft the wheelhouse. He suggested that it would be "getting even" with him if we could get the rooster, wring its neck, and have it cooked at the Irish woman's house.

This chap wakened me one night about 1 A.M., and while he kept watch, I went on the *Ailsa*, opened the door of the coop, and getting the rooster by the neck, twisted it before it could squawk, and passed it to my chum.

We took the bird first to our cooking galley, where my chum Alex lounged at night, and about 5 A.M. I sneaked ashore to my Irish friend, whose name, by the way, was Mrs. Finnegan.

However, murder will out! The rooster's neck was wrung so hard that the steward on the *Ailsa* tracked the blood to our galley door!

Our cook had been sailing in the packet ships between



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New York and Liverpool, where fighting and brutality were going on all the time. Even the Captains and mates, re-inforced by what they called the "afterguard," consisting of carpenter, sailmaker, cook, and steward, just bullied and assaulted the sailors, using brass knuckles or an iron belaying pin, instead of their fists.

So, when the steward of the *Ailsa* tried to tell our cook, in a quiet way, that they had lost the valuable rooster, and then pointed to the drops of blood on our deck, ending abruptly at the cook house, our dignified cook was insulted, and not only was he ready to fight, but threatened to wipe up the deck, using the *Ailsa's* steward for a mop.

I think our cook, Harry, used that morning the most profane language I have ever heard.

When the steward resented this, Harry struck him on the mouth, and as he ran away from the blows, followed him, and kicked him into the scuppers. We had a large audience to all this argument, but not one on the *Ailsa* took the part of the steward against our pugilistic cook. When the chief mate on the *Ailsa* attempted to berate Harry, he was invited aboard our ship, and was told what would happen to him on arrival.

The Captains of the respective ships inquired from their officers what the rumpus was about. The *Ailsa's* Captain, whose name was Gray, seemed bent on commotion; while I looked as innocent as possible.

The cook called me into the cook house, and whispered, "You made a clean job of it; but be careful next time, and clean up the blood."

When we quit work that night, Alex and I dressed up and made for Mrs. Finnegan's supper.

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Cotton was twenty-two cents a pound in New Orleans, and waste cotton, such as Mrs. Finnegan picked up, brought her twelve cents. She offered to pay Alex and me that price for all we could pick up.

The food on our ship was stinted, and what money Alex and I made was spent at the French Market in New Orleans. Mrs. Finnegan dropped a quarter nearly every day between two bales of cotton, which helped to keep starvation away. Alex and I divided our dainties with our shipmates, and how glad they were to get them, though they used to wonder where we made our big money.

I suppose the readers of this story will think shipowners were hardhearted people; but many of the owners of ships, however, were the most public-spirited men in the communities in which they lived. They just took the attitude that sailors were a hard lot, and had to be kept down. The enormous profits made in shipping in 1867 made the owners greedy, and blind to the needs of their servants.

I once had the opportunity of perusing figures presented to a commission of inquiry that was trying to find out why labor was so dissatisfied with existing conditions in Great Britain. The newspapers published that a large Liverpool steamship company had made a profit of £2,400,000 on a capital of £3,250,000. The directors set aside a paltry sum of £10,000 for the superannuation fund of the men who had risked their lives in making it.

The Great War came on, and the scarcity of labor made a great change. A change would have come without the war, and those who were enjoying their sail through life in first class cabins would have been arriving at the place



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they had been steering for—that is, on the rocks—just the same.

The mills of the gods grind slowly, but the oppressor of the poor will find himself in very small bits, unless he, or she, takes the principle of love, and good will, and justice, into their dealings.

There is a great gulf between capital and labor in Great Britain, a cleft that should be healed. It is foolish to ignore this condition of discontent. It will rise in intensity and volume until justice is reached, or chaos and anarchy will be the result, with loss and misery to all.

The labor unions are sometimes as arbitrary as the employers of labor, and that engenders bad feeling.

The wages of longshoremen are seventy-five per cent more than in pre-war days, but the men unwisely do one-third less work.

I am not taking the part of either employer or laborer, but do insist that the teachings of the Gospel should be fully practised by both parties.

I never could understand how the firm which owned the *Curlew* could expect honest service from the Captains and officers, or stewards. I am sure they did not get it.

Captain Gray of the *Ailsa* had seven pounds per month, and a share of the freight carried in the fore-cabin, or dining room. Every bale of cotton that could be put in these places was so much money for the Captain. The only way to get into our cabin was sideways.

Captain Flarty was the Commodore of his Line, and had ten pounds per month. The ship chandlers and stores that supplied provisions gave the Captains bonuses, which added to the scheme.

I do not think there was any real water supply in New

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Orleans except the river and the rain that fell from the skies. The houses had large tanks on a platform, used for catching rain water. The only water we had on our ship was pumped out of the river, and was so muddy that it was necessary to let it settle for a week, and then bore a hole in our large water casks, to get the clear water from the top.

In spite of these precautions, six of our men were laid up with dysentery a week before we left New Orleans. We left them in the hospital, and three never did a stroke of work on the way to Liverpool. Chairs were rigged, and we lowered them into a boat to be taken to the hospital.

They looked like skeletons, who were big, robust men before this curse; but having no proper medical care (to save expense) and no facilities available on shipboard for their relief, their doom was sealed, and all three died.

Many of our crew had slight attacks of the disease, while a few others, like myself, were just as well as if we were drinking spring water.

A large tug took hold of us early in the morning of March sixth, 1868, and we reached the bar that always forms at the mouth of the Mississippi, where we grounded.

I was always of the opinion that the tug boat Captain deliberately put us aground on a shoal place. We lay there all night, and when Captain Flarty complained to the Captain of the tug boat, this worthy allowed that we were too deeply loaded.

The tug left us, but came back in the morning, and told the mate to give them a good hawser, as they would have a hard job to float us.

Mr. Penguin, our mate, consulted with Captain Flarty,



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who reluctantly consented to give the tug our brand new manilla hawser.

We all wondered why the tug hauled all the hawser in and coiled it down on his deck, leaving us only enough to make fast to our towing bitts.

The tug then took a position about three hundred feet on our starboard, and, going full speed across our bows, snapped the hawser at the bow chock, and deliberately hauled all the hawser in and steamed away.

Captain Flarty was a good-looking, red-cheeked man, and while not over five feet eight, had immense shoulders and arms. He did not get a chance to use his muscles on the towboat Captain, but Mrs. Flarty would have been disgraced to have heard what came out of his mouth.

With the pull and twist which our ship took when the hawser parted, her hold on the sand bar was loosened, and we floated clear, the current carrying us into the Gulf.

We sheeted home the lower topsails, and short handed as we were, hoisted our upper topsails, one at a time.

I was a good helmsman, and Captain Flarty told me I would get ten shillings per month more if I took my regular trick at the steering wheel. That was good news, and I began to think that the old world was not such a bad place to live in, after all.

The next day was Sunday, and I put on my best shirt, and a pair of top-boots with red tops.

It was my turn at the wheel from eight to ten A.M. The chief mate came on deck and relieved the second mate, and the first thing he saw was the red topped boots. He looked grouchy, and walked all round me, admiring the boots.

At last he blurted out, "Now I know where my keg of

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patent driers went." I did not know he had lost any driers; but he knew that Alex and I had not drawn any money in New Orleans. He also knew that we were never short of money.

I pretended to be hopping mad, and allowed I would make him prove I was a thief when we got to Liverpool. My bluff did not seem to impress him much, and he shook his fist in my face. I let go the wheel and showed fight. He walked away, but tried to impress on me that I was a young scoundrel, and would end my days at the end of a rope attached to my neck.

I really did not think that stealing anything from Pollok and Gilmour was a sin. I was growing fast, and required food, and often the only way I got it was by stealing.

But making money as Alex and I did in New Orleans, with the thought in mind of buying food, twisted our whole moral attitude, and we began to think it was quite the right thing to steal and make money and buy souvenirs to take home. We even wore red top-boots that did not disturb our consciences. Our thinking apparatus was out of kilter, and we blamed it on the shipowners, who, like ourselves, needed a good conscience to lead them to provide for us properly.

To sum the whole thing up, it was the inhumanity of the old wooden ship days, both at sea and ashore.

The thought of poor Thompson often comes up before me—a man having his foot bitten off by a shark just because shipowners and Captain did not think it necessary to provide toilet facilities. In those days many men were swept overboard from the bows, and never seen again.



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One man, I remember, had four children. Do you wonder that I keep harping about this subject, although it happened sixty years ago?

The Kaiser is blamed for starting the war, and I believe it to be true; but remember, please, that it was an indirect result of the war that wages were increased, and the manner of living, especially in the United States, is on a higher standard, particularly among the common people.

Thank God we are now living under these improved conditions.

But, I must get on with my story of how we made Liverpool, short four men, and with only two men in place of those who went to the hospital in New Orleans.

One of the new men was a fairly good sailor, but the other was a born loafer.

One day the mate ordered the fore royal loosed and set. I asked this shirker why he did not do such jobs in his turn. His answer was, "Not when bloody kids like you are around."

I went up and loosed the sail, but when I came down, my temper would not allow me to keep quiet. He was a man about thirty-five, and looked a hard ticket, but I took a chance and told him I thought he was a dirty loafer, and that I was doing a man's work, but was not to be imposed upon by a man of his type.

He called me an ugly, filthy name, and threatened to break my jaw. I invited him to try it, which he promptly did. He made a vicious swipe at me. I ducked, and he missed me, and, as he swung around, I smashed him between the eyes. I knew a little about boxing, and he was no novice, and came back at me viciously, while my nose was bleeding profusely. I did not care after that, what

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happened, and kept on doing my best to keep him from gripping me, as he would have crushed me with his superior strength.

We were forward of the foremast, and the mate and Captain, who were on the poop, could not see the fight. The boatswain went aft and reported that Larry Lanigan was fighting with the boy Bob. Captain Flarty was very active, and bounded along the deck and struck Lanigan on the side of his head, with just his open hand, downing him with some force.

I was bleeding at the nose, and mouth, and looked as if I were badly hurt. Lanigan had a black eye, and really looked worse than I.

The Captain told Larry that he had been watching him shirk his work, and that more of the medicine would be his portion if he did not do his share.

We had no more trouble with him, and he did his full share and a little more.

Boy fashion, I felt rather cocky over this episode. Being brought up in the streets of Glasgow, I had learned to handle myself in the way of defense, which was much needed on board ship, and I really think it should be a part of every boy's education.

We were three weeks getting from the mouth of the Mississippi out of the Gulf of Mexico, and, during that time, witnessed a terrific storm. We saw a little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, come up out of the west, and spreading like a pall of soot over the sky, broke into a copper colored blast across the darkness, discharging bolts of lightning with a sudden deafening roar of the hurricane's wrecking force that came with it. Balls of fire at the mastheads and yard-arms, and it seemed im-



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possible for us to survive without pretty severe damage.

Rain fell in torrents, and with such weight and force that we could not stand. We plugged our scuppers and replenished our rain water, and waited. Gradually, the wind subsided, the sky opened up, and the sea robins appeared on deck. All was well again!

The four men who were sick seemed unimproved, and for their sakes we had been wishing for a speedy passage home.

One day we were quite near an American ship, and Captain Flarty hoisted signal flags to inform them that we were short of provisions. They were cordial, and asked us to send a boat.

When the Captain of the American ship was told about the sick men he very kindly gave us tins of soup and meat, and other dainties. He also gave us three large loaves of sugar. We were short of sugar, and received only a small portion each week. Imagine begging for food, and only three weeks from New Orleans!

Alex and I did not take well to the shortage of sugar, and begged and stole to get it. The pantry was in a passageway leading to the saloon, and I tried to open it one night with some keys I had found.

Our carpenter had a key hanging on a nail at the head of his bunk in the deck house, which was occupied by the petty officers, and which Alex and I shared with them. I tried this key successfully, and filled a canvas bag with this toothsome treat!

We knew there would be a rumpus and a search made for this priceless article, so that night we sat by the anchor chain, hitting it a blow at a time to make it easier to conceal behind the bales of cotton in the fore-cabin.

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The steward missed the sugar before 8 A.M., just when Alex and I were coming on deck for the forenoon watch. He had reported to Captain Flarty, and the chief mate had searched the forecabin and the house on deck.

I felt shaky, and wondered if I had well covered my tracks. I had no sense of guilt, believing I had as good a right to the sugar as the officers in the cabin.

Someone found a little sugar near the forecabin that had sifted through the bag, and suspicion that the sailors were concerned in it seemed reasonable.

The Captain said that someone must have a key to the pantry, and a search was made for this person. I said that the only key around was one that the carpenter had to the house.

The mate asked "Chips" for the key, and, to everybody's surprise, it fitted the pantry lock. The Carpenter was a man about fifty, and a confirmed grouch and growler. The younger members of the crew, and especially myself, delighted in teasing him.

When the search was over, and things had quieted down, the carpenter asked why I had tried to cast suspicion on him, by telling the mate he had a key.

"Well," I said, "I wanted to be sure that innocents like Alex and myself were not blamed for stealing." He was perfectly sure of our guilt, and threatened to cut us down with his broadax!

We carried on sail, and, in spite of the three weeks of calm in the Gulf, docked in Liverpool forty-two days from New Orleans.

After discharging the cotton we took on seven hundred tons of salt for ballast, to be discharged in Quebec in exchange for logs and deals.



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Mrs. Flarty came to Liverpool and lived on the ship.

I remained by the ship with the officers. I should have gone home, but wanted to save some money for Mother to put in the home bank.

We left for Quebec on the thirtieth of May, with a good crew of nearly all Shetland Island sailors.

Being in ballast trim, our decks were nearly always dry, and I enjoyed this trip. Having light winds, especially in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it took us fifty days to reach Quebec.

When we were about one hundred miles from Quebec, there was such a strong tide and current from the St. Lawrence River that we could not stem it, unless we had a strong, fair wind. No towboat to take us, nothing but the old sails to depend on.

Two years afterward, when I was third officer of a fine clipper called the *Gleniffer* we often were able to get a tow from one hundred and fifty miles below Quebec right up to Montreal. People had awakened to the fact that time was money.

The *Gleniffer* made four voyages from Glasgow to Montreal with full cargoes in eight months and twenty-seven days. That was in 1867.

In 1870 I was with her when we made three voyages from Glasgow to Montreal, and one to New York, from March twenty-fifth to December twenty-fourth.

These were the good old days, and the incoming of the iron clipper ship.

We lay at Point Levy, about a mile from the town. The weather was lovely, plenty of sunshine, and yet the air was fresh and bracing.

The last regiment of British soldiers—the Seventy-

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second Highlanders—that were stationed in Canada were camped on the heights just above where we were loading timber.

Of the one thousand men in the regiment, nine hundred and seventy were Scotch, and nearly all were natives of Glasgow. We had many good times visiting one another.

We loaded the immense logs of pine through ports on each side of the stem, while the crew assisted the shore men, and heaved the logs in with what we called crab winches.

The chief mate put me on one of those hand winches, and Captain Flarty stood by and watched. One day when we were heaving a very big load he told the mate that it was too heavy work for a growing boy. Again I was lucky!

Some of the crew were getting in two inch planks, or deals, through small ports in the stern, and I remembered hearing the sailors repeating a phrase, "Knock off work, and carry deals." I was cheeky enough to repeat this to the mate, and told him that, if he did not mind, I would go back to my winch.

He growled and muttered, thinking, I suppose, that I was too much of a favorite with the Captain.

I had taken a chum, a young Irishman, who had just landed in Liverpool, and Captain Flarty liked his appearance and gave him a chance. His name was Mark Hill, and he was a little over sixteen years of age, nearly six feet in height, and red-headed. We took a great liking to each other.

Our thoughtful Danish cook gave Mark and me many a good snack. I think he also realized that we were favorites of the Captain, and always kept telling us how he



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had courted and married an English woman just before he joined the *Curlew*. He said that his new wife kept a boarding house, and that Mark and I might be lucky enough to get lodgings there.

When the wooden ships became old and leaky, and, in many cases, strained, and broken backed, they were put into the Quebec trade, where it did not matter whether they leaked or not. My boy readers may wonder how a broken backed ship looks. She is depressed forward and aft, and has a hump in the middle, caused by straining.

We were surrounded by ships of this type. One of them had been ninety days from London to Quebec, another eighty days, and several seventy. One old timer, the *Bucefales*, had left Liverpool with eight hundred tons of salt, and leaked so badly that when they reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence, all that was left of the cargo was the bagging. They passed chains round her, and wrapped her together, and finally reached Liverpool.

We left Quebec during the latter part of August, and, as we were deeply loaded, having deals on deck, did not make very fast time, taking thirty-five days to make the passage.

Nothing very striking occurred on the passage, but our cook invited Mark and me to his wife's boarding house, and when we arrived found that she had taken another husband while we were gone. The cook, whose name was Karl Hansen, thought to surprise his wife, opened the door and walked in. Hansen's wife was sitting on the knee of a tall, ugly looking individual.

When the lady recovered she introduced the man as her brother Harry, who had only arrived that morning,

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after an absence of fifteen years. He told us that he had been wrecked in the South Sea Islands.

There were two young women connected with the establishment, and one of these was dispatched in great haste to replenish a big jug of ale.

Hansen did not have much to say, neither did he respond to the fondlings which Mrs. Hansen bestowed upon him. She began to weep, and finally they went upstairs, but returned in about half an hour in a very loving way, Hansen with his arm round his wife's very ample waist.

One of the girls became half soused, and fell in love with Mark. She confided that the long lost brother had been there for a week, and was also there nine months before, at which time Mrs. Hansen was called Mrs. Briggs.

Mark and I departed from that happy home the next morning, gratefully returning to the *Curlew*.

I never saw Hansen after we were paid off the *Curlew*. I heard, however, that he was bound out to sea again in a ship sailing to Valparaiso, in Chili. His new venture was a small barque in the iron ore trade. She was lost on the passage out, trying to make a quick passage through the Straits of Magellan. Poor Hansen was a simple soul, and did not realize that he had a fiend in human form for a wife. It was a case of "Rise up, Jack, and let John sit down." The new arrival with a good pay day was the hunky boy. The revelation that such women existed was an awful shock to me.

Pollok and Gilmour were putting up the *Curlew* for sale, and because they were both builders and owners, expected to make a good profit.

One day Captain Flarty came aboard greatly excited, and told us that the ship had been sold to the firm of



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Davis and Co., and that Captain Evans was being transferred from one of their own ships to the *Curlew*. We all felt downcast, including the Flarty family, as the Captain would be idle, and we would have to hustle for ourselves.

The day after we heard the news that the *Curlew* was sold, Captain Evans came down to look things over, and Captain Flarty told about the "boy Bob" having been with the ship since she was built, and knew just where her sails and gear were stowed. So the new Captain asked me to stay at a wage of twenty-four shillings per week, while we remained in port. I was anxious to stay, when he agreed to keep Mark and ship us both on a voyage to sleepy Bombay.

The six weeks that Mark and I spent on the *Curlew* while she was tied up to the dock in Liverpool were exciting and happy ones, especially to Mark and Mary Ann Flarty, as they had fallen deeply in love, and with the full consent of Captain and Mrs. Flarty, could write to each other.

Just one week before we were to sail, I was surprised to see Captain Flarty come on board the *Curlew* and whisper that he was going to take command of a ship, *The Great Northern*, belonging to Ferney's "Black Ball Line."

Captain Flarty had been employed by Pollok and Gilmour for a number of years, but they were unusually stingy, so he was glad to go in the *Great Northern*, when Ferney offered him eight pounds more a month.

The result of Captain Flarty's visit to the *Curlew* was that I promised to ship with him on the *Great Northern*. When I told Captain Evans that I was leaving, he advised me to reconsider my decision. I told him I had been with

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Captain Flarty two voyages, and preferred to make the voyage to Bombay and other Indian ports under his command.

Captain Evans told me that the *Great Northern* was quite a large ship, carrying about twenty-five hundred tons, but was slow and unwieldy. He felt badly about my leaving him, but when I met him in Bombay he treated me very kindly. I made a hurried visit to Glasgow, to bid my folks good-bye. In the beginning of my story I have referred to a little girl with auburn curls with whom I was in love. I had known her since we were ten years of age, but she kept clear of me whenever I was home from sea. Something told me, however, that she loved me.

My Father and Mother came with me to the Liverpool boat to see me off, and, as we stood conversing, someone slipped a book into my hand. I turned quickly, and found it was my wee lassie.

She ran, but not too quickly, so that I easily overtook her.

"Oh, Aggie," said I (Agnes was her name), "how good of you to come and see me away."

Agnes raised her blushing face and said, "Bob, I love you; I have always loved you." We were standing in a sheltered nook of the old steamboat shed, and the dear girl, in her shy, sweet way, just yielded herself to my embrace and kisses.

That was the one moment in my life that brought me a real, true, and a sweet content. A delicious happiness, that just made me feel that the world was filled with sunshine.

How often I lived over the ten minutes we had to-



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gether, during the ensuing voyage on the *Great Northern*. In all our courtship there was never any of what is now called "petting." True love never descends to the petting stage. I loved her intensely, or, I might say, purely, and there was always something sacred to me about her person.

She promised to write to Bombay, and I promised to write at every opportunity. My letters were to be sent in care of my parents, fearing if my letters went to her home she would probably not be allowed to have them.

They thought me a wild boy before going to sea, and now I was a sailor, which they considered a bad lot, with a wife in every port.

I was so thrilled with happiness, even though we were parting for such a long time, that I did not care what came to me. It was enough bliss to have Aggie say, "I love you, Bob."

The steamer's whistle blew, and we had to part. Many an anxious hour the dear ones had before they clasped my hand again.

I arrived in Liverpool next day, and signed articles on the *Great Northern*. Captain Flarty gave me two pounds and five shillings per month. The able seaman got only two pound ten.

The *Great Northern* hauled out of the dock in Birkenhead on the twelfth of December, 1868, separating Mark Hill and Mary Ann, while tears and unusual sadness seemed to be about them.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Wreck of the Great Northern*

**B**EFORE we left the dock the roll call proved that four men were missing. Sixteen Welshmen had shipped as able seamen, and four of these were the missing ones. Therefore, boarding house runners and crimps were on hand to supply men which we called "pier head jumps." One of the men was a Wigan collier, who had run away from home the day before, and this was the first time he had seen a ship. Only one out of the four could pass as a sailor.

The boarding house keeper held a ticket entitling him to draw a month's pay for each man. The only article the men received was the proverbial "donkey's breakfast." This was a gunny sack, with enough straw in it to make it one inch thick. Apart from the injustice connected with the month's advance, it made a hardy class of men, if they were strong enough to live through it.

We were towed down about twenty-five miles, and had our topsails hoisted, and then set our top-gallant sails. The wind was not strong, just a good working breeze. Our pilot left us at Point Lynas, and we were cut loose, as we supposed, from everybody, until we saw Bombay.

About midnight the wind hauled ahead, and all hands were called to tack ship. She missed stays, that is, refused to go on the opposite tack, and after getting good way on her we tried again, and around she came. We were very close to sand bars, and Captain Flarty soon



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realized that he was entertaining a melon. Mrs. Flarty was intensely religious, and had the Captain pretty well trained in his proper language. But he was sorely tested that first night on the *Great Northern*, and several times a ——— came in a muttering way from his lips.

About noon next day it was noised around the ship that we were heading for Holy Head Harbor, which is about sixty miles from Liverpool. The wind being ahead for going down channel toward the open sea, everybody thought Captain Flarty was only seeking temporary shelter until the wind shifted.

We all realized that it was dangerous to be in the *Great Northern*, as she would neither wear nor stay when such operations were necessary. She seemed incapable and lifeless, and if we ever got on a lee shore she would never be able to claw herself off.

I had been aloft several times, and was surprised to find that the ship's widest part was forward of the foremast.

From the mainmast to the stern she narrowed down, and seemed more like a coffin than a ship. She had been loaded very deeply with coal, and as she leaked somewhat, was very slow in responding to her helm.

About six P.M. we anchored in Holy Head Harbor. It was only by the great skill and daring of our Captain that we avoided collisions with other vessels, as the *Great Northern* required the whole harbor to herself.

Captain Flarty went ashore in a tug, but returned that same night, and nothing was said about our future movements.

The next day the steward told me the Captain wished to see me; and he took me into his room, and, in a very

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sorrowful tone of voice said, "Robert, I am a very sick man; and I must leave the ship and get to my home." He also informed me that he had been examined by a doctor in Holy Head, who advised him to leave the ship at once.

While ashore he had wired his owners to send another Captain.

This did not suit me, and I told him that if he were leaving I would get out of the old tub if I had to swim ashore. I felt the tears gathering in my eyes, and could see the tears trickling down the bronzed cheeks of my Captain; but he did not wish to express in words what he felt, even to me.

He realized that I had left a fine ship to sail with him, and mentioned that it might be all for the best.

He counselled me to make the voyage, saying that upon my return I would be a man, and have an able seaman's rating.

Two days afterward our new Captain arrived, and I felt very lonely and blue as I shook hands with my old Captain.

The night before the change, ten of the Welsh sailors deserted, leaving only two of the banded group. This caused more delay, as we had to get men from Liverpool. We were surely under a curse!

These two sailors were cousins, named Jim and Ed Williams. They were thorough sailors, very quiet and agreeable shipmates. On the long passage to Bombay they showed me how to do fancy knots, and make mats. They never became involved in any brawls or arguments, and were too good to associate with such characters as were to be found in a ship's fore-castle.



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I often thought afterward how strange it was that they did not leave the ship. Who knows the whys and the wherefores, and what reason made them stay on that old wagon?

Through the change of Captains and the desertion of our shipmates, Mark Hill and I stuck together, and shared with one another the dainties that we had brought from Liverpool.

When the ten new sailors arrived they proved a motley gang, and we could see at once that they had been born under many different flags.

I will try to describe a few of them whose faces come up before me through the mists of sixty years.

One was a Swedish telegraph clerk who had left home with the thought of seeing the world and participating in some of its adventures, as well as trying his hand at all the different ways of making money about which he had read. He was fair, and very good-looking, well bred, and intelligent. He could not speak a word of English, but within three months talked quite well, and was able to tell me about his home life. In the five months and twenty days he had learned to speak much better English than the Yorkshire miner.

Next was a high German farmer. He could not speak English, and was very stupid. How he came to cross the North Sea was always a mystery, as there did not seem to be even a spark of adventure in his make-up.

The only real sailors we had were a Devonshire man, about forty-five years of age, who had been a diver in the English navy, and a Frenchman about thirty-five.

The Frenchman was a strong character, who had seen life from many angles. He was well built, deep chested,

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and extremely hairy. His breast was just a mat of coal black hair.

We acquired one other good sailor among the ten who joined us at Holy Head, in the person of a small, but very compactly built fellow hailing from London. He was a regular old deep sea sailor, and out of his great experience could spin yarns worth listening to. We called him Bill Bridgewater; and he gave me a detailed account of the fight between the *Kearsage* and the Confederate privateer *Alabama*, which had happened recently, and was fresh in our memories.

He had been in the *Alabama* for thirteen months, and claimed to have had a good time, with good wages and plenty of food, which they always took out of the Northern ships before sinking them.

We asked him how he liked Captain Semmes, and he admitted that he admired him as a daring, resolute man who would, and had to, take desperate chances to further the Southern cause. Bridgewater told me that he was one of the men who were picked up, along with Captain Semmes, by an English yacht, when the *Alabama* was sunk.

I have not said anything about the mates on the *Great Northern*. Their troubles began when the anchor left the ground in Holy Head Harbor. What a job we had to hoist the topsails, and work our way out of the channel toward the sea. There were only four men, besides myself, who could steer the ship, and my rating was only that of ordinary seaman.

The chief mate belonged to Liverpool, and had been trained in the Black Ball Line ships which ran between New York and Liverpool, and he did not seem to know



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anything about getting work done without using abusive language and force. He was about thirty years old, and a born driver of men.

The second mate was in a class by himself; an Irishman with black hair and olive complexion. I always believed that he was a descendant of some of the Spanish sailors who were wrecked on the coast of Ireland when the great fleet of ships called the Spanish Armada came to try to conquer England. He looked like a Spaniard, and acted like the Devil.

The third officer was a little gentleman, with good manners, and I surmised that he had come from a good family. He became a valuable man, and we became good friends. His life had been daring, and he had served his time in the famous *Brocklebank* ships, running to the East Indies and China.

When our ship was half way down the channel it began to blow very heavily, with an ugly sea, making our old tub leak, as she rolled and strained. This boat had a donkey engine which was supposed to hoist the topsails, and also drive the pump. A brother-in-law of the chief mate had been shipped as a carpenter's mate, and driver of the donkey engine. He had never been to sea before, and even if he had known how to operate the engine, he was so seasick that he lay helpless in his bunk. The donkey engine was supposed to do the work of four men, and, with the men who had never been to sea, sick and useless, our position was indeed desperate.

One night, after sounding out the pump-well, our carpenter reported seven feet of water in the hold. We were cold, wet, and hungry; no cooking could be done with the ship rolling and wallowing in the terrible sea, which had

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continuously washed us away from the pump handles. Perkins and I were very much concerned about locating something that would float us if the *Great Northern* took a last dive.

There was a chicken coop at the break of the poop deck, and we hopefully took time to fasten life buoys onto each end. I had grown strong and agile, and could hang onto a rope by my teeth if need be, and had no fear of being drowned.

At last the gale moderated, and the wind shifted to northeast, so that the old caravan slowly made her way out into the Atlantic.

If the conditions were bad for men like Frenchy, or Perkins, or myself, it was so much worse for the green-horns—men like the German farmer, who was not able to understand a given order. They were kicked and thumped about, in order to make them go aloft, while the expressions on their faces were pitiful as the second mate kicked them for not executing orders given in a language they did not understand.

The second mate, who was a very strong brute, six feet tall, and all bone and muscle, wore number eleven shoes ashore, but when such feet as his were encased in big, leather, sea boots, it was cruel to see the German farmer, "Dublin," knocked down, and in the act of falling be kicked clear across the ship by the mate.

The Swedish telegraph clerk tried to grasp what the officers were ordering him to do, and did manage to escape some of the kicking. The Wigan collier and some of the other pier head jumps tried to make themselves useful, and those who spoke English got less abuse than the foreigners.



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Photographed on my brain is the scene on our ship's deck, as she rolled and tumbled, while the officers and the few sailors we had, tried to bring order out of chaos.

One of the substitutes in place of our good Welsh sailor was a native of Venice. How he landed in Liverpool must have been a puzzle. He had perfect features, and his nose and chin were beautifully moulded, while his olive complexion was purer and more delicate than I have ever seen on the face of any woman. He was about eighteen, and the down of young manhood was on his cheeks and chin. His attractive, highbred appearance saved him from many heavy kicks and blows.

Our new Captain had a very gentlemanly appearance, and looked very much out of place with his bucko officers. I heard afterwards that he had been Captain on the finest Australian clippers, but had lost out through drink.

He must have had a plentiful supply of liquor on board the *Great Northern*, as at one time he never left his cabin for two weeks. It was whispered around that he just stayed below, drinking.

He allowed the mate to run the ship, and, I suppose, thought it best to wink at the brutality that he could not have avoided recognizing.

As we sailed toward the south, into fine weather, the ship did not leak as much, though even in fine weather the watch on deck from four to six A.M. were constantly at the pumps. This time was taken for pumping, to enable the men to start the routine work at six o'clock. Then the watch on deck from six to eight P.M. pumped, instead of having that time for rest or a social time, such as we had enjoyed on ships like the *Curlew* or the *City of Montreal*.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The five of us who could be depended upon to steer in all kinds of weather got clear of pumping, and much of the other drudgery.

Many fine ships passed us. In the morning we would see them away behind us; at noon they would be abeam; and at night away ahead.

One of our pier head jumpers was born in the east end of London. He was a low blackguard, and very offensive in his manner to me. He had been to sea for five years, and was three years older than I, so looked on me as a boy whom he could boss. I knew that I was doing an able seaman's work, and resented his overbearing attitude.

His name was Bill Sykes, and I think he must have been a relation of Charles Dickens' character of the typical London thief. He had a low forehead, was slightly pock-marked, and his head was covered with a thatch of dirty, red hair.

One day he gave the mate a saucy answer, and, when the mate started toward him, Sykes turned and ran along the deck. The mate overtook him, and kicked him into the scuppers. I concluded then and there that Sykes had a streak of yellow.

From that time on I determined to fight him the first time he got fresh, or used abusive language to me. I told Alex Perkins what I intended to do, and was advised to go ahead, and he would back me, and see that I was well handled.

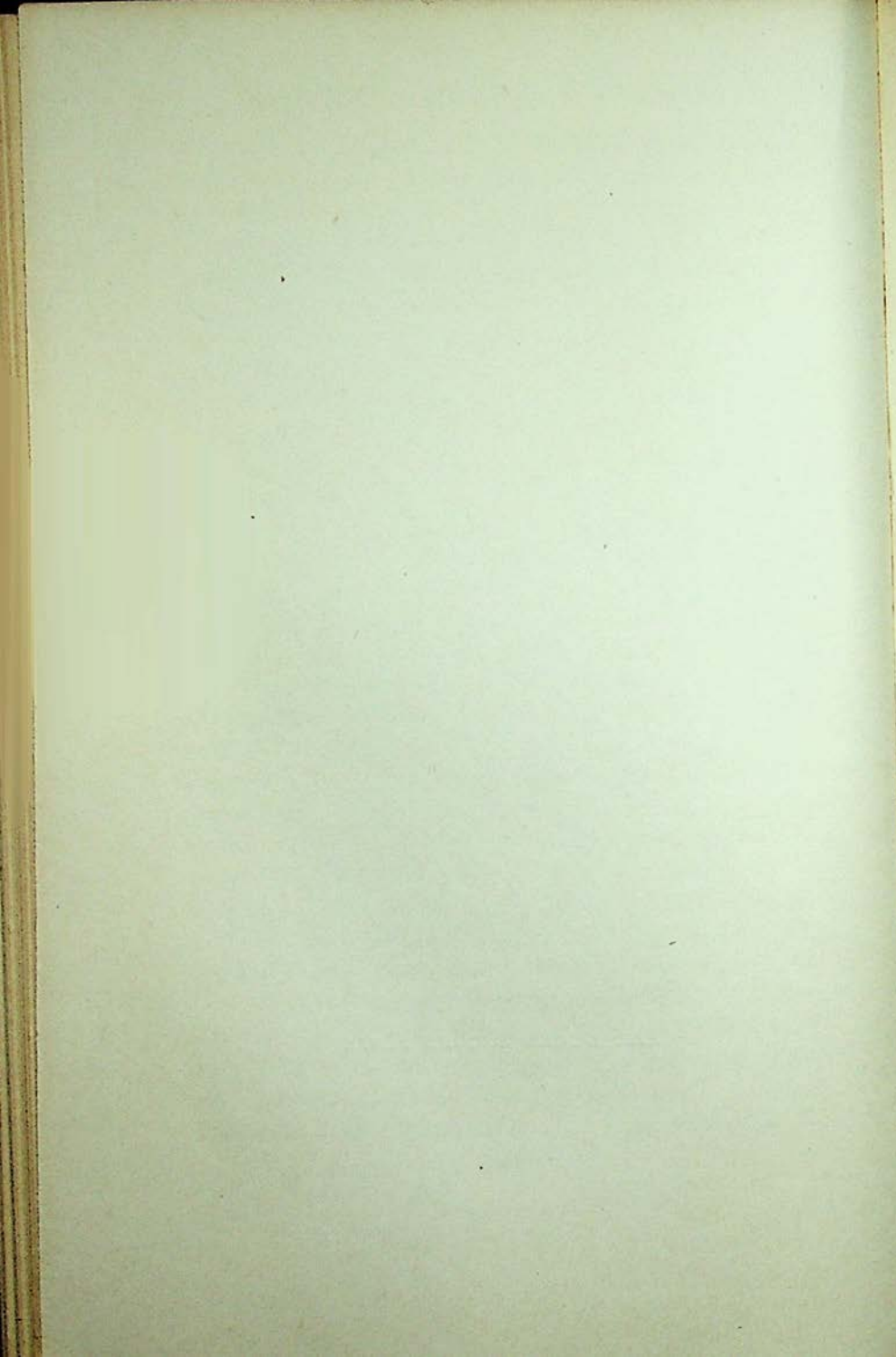
I did not relish fighting Sykes, as he was a hard looking pill, and about fifteen pounds heavier than I; but Alex could use his paws, and with his backing I was willing to take a licking.

Something of the brute must have been imparted to me





THE BUCKO SECOND MATE





## *The Wreck of the Great Northern*

through seeing so much brutality, because I felt just like fighting, and when Sykes gave me a shove and knocked me against the ship's side, I said to myself, "Now or never."

I hauled off and struck him fair on his little, pock-marked nose, making the blood flow quite freely. Sykes tried to grip me, but I managed to keep away from him. I was quite excited, and trembling all over, but became self-poised when I found myself able to keep Sykes from coming in to close quarters.

We were forward of the deck house, and could not be seen from the quarter deck. Alex was between us while we stripped off our shirts, and said, "Go it."

Go it we did, for a full half hour.

I was continually gathering confidence, but Sykes seemed to have lost his from the moment I had turned on him and smashed his nose.

He was crafty, and his early education on the streets of London's east end made it hard for me to overcome the advantage he had in weight and experience. We were weak and tottering, but still jabbing away at each other's bruised faces, when the officers came running forward and threw us apart. Alex begged Mr. Jones, the chief mate, to let us continue the fight to a finish, but we had to stop, or be put in irons.

Someone got a bucket of salt water and washed Sykes off, and Mark Hill did the same for me, while he whispered, "Sykes will not bother you any more."

The next day we were taken aft to the Captain, and severely reprimanded. He told us that it was in his power to fine us a month's pay, besides putting us in irons.

Our eyes were nearly closed, and our faces so badly

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

bruised that it was weeks before we got back to normal.

A few days after our fight I caught Sykes abusing the lad from Venice. I stepped right up to him and told him to leave the boy alone, fully expecting him to turn on me, but he just looked at me and walked away. I had no more trouble with him, and had gained a little confidence in my ability to defend myself against injustice.

We lost about a week in the doldrums, as we call the airs between the northeast and southeast trades.

Sharks were plentiful, and one day we caught three, who seemed to be a father and mother and a very lively young son, six feet long. The father was a little less than fourteen feet. He had seven rows of teeth in each jaw. Every tooth was just like a razor blade. When we were hauling him in, tail first, over the stern, he splintered the heavy rail on the fore part of the poop with one swipe of his tail. I have heard sailors say that they had caught sharks eighteen feet long. I should not like to handle them.

I mention these sharks because our old Danish cook said he wished we would leave them alone, because he was firm in the belief that they brought bad luck.

Albatross were plentiful, circling round our masts. One day in a calm sea we caught several; and, after skinning them, made a stew which we thickened with flour. With our appetites we could digest nails, and were grateful to get a feed of albatross or shark.

Our cook would have nothing to do with cooking them, so we had to improvise old meat tins and cook the stew ourselves. He was very pessimistic, and seemed to sense that disaster and death were allotted to us on this ill-fated ship. We laughed at him, and tried to cheer him up.



## *The Wreck of the Great Northern*

Memories seemed to be haunting him, and often he reminded us to look at his feet, minus toes.

As we neared the Cape of Good Hope we had strong, westerly winds, but never were able to drive the *Great Northern* more than eight knots.

An American ship, the *Starlight*, passed us quickly one day, with her three top-gallant sails set, proving that she must have been going at least fifteen knots. Our ship was yawing around, first three points one side of her course, then three points to the other side, and we were only able to carry our topsails.

We rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and, with favoring winds, steered north for Bombay, arriving June tenth close to the entrance of Bombay Harbor. I was at the wheel, and heard the Captain say to Mr. Jones that he expected to see the pilot boat any minute.

Within a few minutes, and without any warning, we were enshrouded in a thick mist, with rain ahead coming down in sheets. All hands were called to 'bout ship, as we could not go any closer to the land until it cleared up. The ship was so slow and ungainly that we just drifted to leeward. The sun did not come out at noon so that we could determine our exact position.

We tacked several times, but went steadily to leeward. It was the setting in of the southwest monsoons, and the wind had freshened so that we had to take in all our light sails.

At six o'clock the next morning, with the mate's watch, I was called on deck to tack ship, as the lookout man reported breakers ahead. I wore an old sleeveless shirt and a pair of dungaree pants, a belt with knife and sheath.

The helm was put hard-a-lee, and the old dame came

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

head to wind for the last time. I was at my station attending the spanker sheet, when I felt the ship touch bottom. She lifted as a heavy roller passed under, and came down with a crash that drove the rudder through the casing.

The Captain was frantic. He had no idea that he was near the Bassien Shoals, or that we had gone thirty-five miles to leeward within twenty-four hours.

Captain Renshaw's first order was to let go both anchors, and launch a boat.

We could see low land about ten miles away, and a surf rolling mountain high between us. The Captain wanted Mr. Jones to go into the boat and get in touch with Bombay and have tugs come to pull us clear. He said that Bassien River came out abreast the shoals, and that he would know by the color of the water when he was in line with the river, whose water would be deeper and the surf much lighter.

Alex and I, being young and active, were sent up on the main yard and dropped a line on deck that was rove through a tail block. This was done to have a tackle sent up to us for lifting a life boat from on top of the deck house to the water.

The *Great Northern* was slowly, but surely, drifting to her doom. The anchor chains flew over the windlass, but, in a lull between the rollers, had been secured with ropes. Rising on top of an unusually heavy roller she came down with such force that a large portion of her keel came up alongside. The masts were shaking, and were liable to fall at any moment.

When the strain on her cables tore the windlass out, the Captain shouted for us to come down. It looked as



## *The Wreck of the Great Northern*

if the only way we would get down was along with the mast and yards, but our young frames and flexible muscles won the fight, and we crawled in from the yard-arm and reached the deck.

It was now a case of saving our lives, as the ship was a hopeless wreck. We put one boat with her stern resting on the ship's rail, and launched it with the help of a tackle on the fore topmast backstay. We made a poor job of the launching because her stern went under water, and when she righted, she was more than half full of water.

We had a long, three-inch manilla rope fastened to the life boat, and two buckets tied within her for bailing. As the boat was passed astern it was necessary to give her considerable slack on the painter to allow for the ship rising or falling at least twenty feet on the rollers that seemed like mountains.

Several sharks were seen around the ship, and Bridgewater told me that they were a fierce variety, called surf sharks, and if our boat capsized there was small chance of our reaching land.

Captain Renshaw asked me to go down the painter, get into the life boat, and bail her out, before he tried to load her with men.

I would have liked to have run forward and secure a bundle of letters from my sweetheart, but I could not take the time with the Captain waiting to see if I got into the boat.

I slid down the painter, and hung on while the ship rose on a roller, and as she fell again I pulled myself along the slack rope and got hold of the gunwale of the life boat and climbed in.

A shark about twelve feet long passed across the stern

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

as I got a bucket and started bailing. I knew that a shark did not have much chance to get me during the short time spent getting from the ship into the boat, as I had observed that they had to roll onto their side when they swallowed bait.

I felt strangely strong and hopeful, though the odds seemed against me getting through that ten miles of surf.

I used the bucket with such vim and intentness that I forgot all about sharks and surf. I had the boat nearly dry when I happened to look up, and saw the boat had drifted away up toward the middle of the wreck, and, having a lot of slack rope, had turned her broadside to a towering roller that was coming toward me. I threw the bucket, and put my arms and legs round the midship part and held on, as the roller submerged the boat, and left me under water for what seemed two minutes. The boat was level with the sea; only the air compartment in the bow kept her afloat. Two sharks glided past, turned, and passed again, but I knew it was no use being scared, and that I had to keep cool.

There was a handy boat hook tied with the oars, which I loosened with my sheath knife, and as the two sharks passed again I nearly went overboard when I drove the boat hook into one which was nearly grazing the boat.

I could not see what progress was being made in launching the other life boat, as it was on the port side, and my boat was on the starboard side. How thankful I was when the boat was dropped astern, and the mate tried to holler above the noise of the surf, and made signs for me to abandon my boat and get in the other one.

I had about seventy-five feet to go, and, watching a chance between the rollers, I dove, and struck out for the



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other boat, making all the noise and fuss I could to keep the sharks away. The sheath knife was in my hand, but I was hoping and praying that it would not be necessary to use it, as I was no expert in the water.

I was thinking what a feat it would be if I were able to come up under a shark and rip him open. I knew this was beyond me, however, and I felt relieved when John Johnson, a Swede, helped me into the life boat, with all my limbs where they belonged.

Johnson was a fine character, and had been shipped as boatswain by Captain Flarty. He was deeply religious, but was disrated because he would take no part in abusing the men; and the middle-aged sailor who had been a diver in the Navy was put in his place.

He clasped my hand, when he helped me into the boat, and said, "Bob, we have no chance of getting ashore." He pointed to the fin of a shark; and allowed that the life boat could not possibly carry us through the mountainous surf. I tried to cheer him, and said that we would all do our best.

We had no trouble in getting into the boat the men who were real sailors, such as Frenchy, who threw two small bundles of clothes down, and they were tied to the thwarts; but when Dublin grasped the rope and slid down into the water, he refused to let go. The ship was fast breaking up, and Dublin kept us from getting away. As the ship rose and took him up, and then dropped, dipping him under water, his yells were weird and pathetic. Between the rollers we hauled the boat close up to him and dragged him in. The Swedish telegraph clerk acted much the same way.

Poor Mark Hill, being unable to swim, lacked confi-

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

dence in himself, and we had some trouble in getting him safely into the boat.

The steward would not go over the stern, but he finally got hold of the place where the main braces were hooked on, and there he hung until a heavy roller swept him away astern of the life boat. A shark's fin was visible, and a faint shriek was heard as the steward disappeared under the water.

I suppose that everybody felt as I did, that our fate would be likewise, and horror and despair must have seized upon most of our company, especially those who were totally unable to care for themselves in the water.

The Captain was the last to come down the rope, and accomplished the feat fairly well.

Mr. Jones and our cook came astern in the Captain's gig, and left ahead of us, the mate rowing. Our boat was overcrowded, having twenty-seven aboard.

We left the ship, and turned around safely, four of us manning the oars. Very good progress was made after leaving the ship, and we soon lost sight of the gig. We couldn't see the land, however, over the towering surf.

When we had gone about five miles we again sighted the gig, bottom up, with the mate trying to hang on, while fighting off a shark with an oar. Mr. Jones told us that a shark, only a few minutes before, had pulled the cook under.

To reach the mate we had to alter our course, and could not get back into the deeper and smoother, and safer, water. We could not haul up again, as that would have brought the sea on our quarter. The Captain concluded to take our chance, and keep the boat running with the sea after us, and asked all who were good swimmers to



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leave the boat when we got close in, lightening her so that the men who could not swim would have a chance for their lives.

The surf grew heavier, and when we got about a mile from shore the life boat's stern rose on the top of an immense roller, and turned end on, throwing us all into the water like a lot of eggshells.

I can but imperfectly describe what took place, as I was struggling to save my life. At such times there is nothing to be seen from any angle. Then it is that primeval instinct alone predominates; there is only one sensation in man and beast, the law of self preservation.

Dublin must have been able to swim some, as he came up alongside me, just as I had secured a hold on the boat's keel. He grabbed and tore the back out of my old shirt, and thinking I was rid of him was a relief, but he soon grabbed me by the leg, and hung on.

Terror and fear, which I had not felt when the sharks were grazing the boat, began to clutch at my heart. I managed to keep just cool enough to get hold of the collar of his shirt and help him grab the keel. He held onto me with one hand and the boat with the other. My pants, with knife, belt, and sheath, had been stripped off, fortunately, as I might have been tempted to use my knife on "Dublin," in order to save my own life.

I coaxed him to let me go, and gently tried to allay his fears, but he uttered not a word, just stared at me like an insane man.

All this took place in the space of a minute's time, between successive rollers.

The poor fellow was uncouth and untrained, but he had

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

been loved and cuddled by some mother, and I would have helped him if possible.

I could see the next roller coming, and realized that it meant quick action. Deciding that my fist would not make much impression on Dublin, I drove my elbow into his face repeatedly, until he finally relaxed his hold. The roller came, and swept the few men away who were hanging onto the boat.

I never saw Dublin again, and swam quickly away, fearful that he might reach me again.

With no land in sight and over the mountainous rollers, my only thought and my only hope was getting back on the boat's keel. So, I swam back to the boat, and tried to hold on, but was repeatedly swept off, and I felt that the end was near.

Swifter than a weaver's shuttle are the thoughts that flash through the brain of a drowning man. My life, like a panorama, came up before me. The last parting, the last sweet kiss. Was it all over, was I never to see that dear face, framed in auburn curls, again?

The agony was terrible, but I might have passed through the ordeal more easily if I had been a stronger swimmer.

Finally I struggled back to the boat once more. She was clincher built, and one of her planks near the stern was opening up. I tried to get my fingers into the rent, and, with feet under the bow of the boat, hang on until she drifted ashore.

My chum Alex was the only one who reached the boat with me, and I was so weak, I could scarcely speak, but managed to bid him good-bye. He tried to cheer me, and encourage me to struggle on, as a roller swept us away.



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When the next roller came, with a roar like thunder, I dove under its crest, and found that I was not tossed over and over, and left breathless as I had been formerly. The next time I did the same thing, and this time my toes touched bottom. From that moment, hope gave me strength, and the thought of seeing my Mother's face, and clasping the hands of the dear ones who were so far away helped me in the final struggle.

Several times I was washed up on the beach, only to be carried out again by the receding waves. I was rolling around, up to my waist in water, when two men, who proved to be the mate and the carpenter, ran in and caught me by the arm, and half carried me up to safety.

When I had struck bottom I thought that everybody except Alex and myself was drowned, and that he might not reach shore. Alex, however, came safely ashore about five minutes behind me. We mustered ten, all told.

The mate and carpenter rescued our exhausted Captain out of the heavy surf.

As my shipmates carried me up the beach I heard one of them say, "Poor Bob is gone"; and I was not able to contradict the statement, but I knew that I would recover, and live to love and be loved, and take a man's place in the world.

They rolled me, and tried to help get rid of the water and sand I had swallowed.

Nothing but sand was to be seen on shore, and, looking out to sea, we could make out only the awful surf and the remains of the old, but doubtless well insured, *Great Northern*.

I was stripped of clothing except a part of the shirt that Dublin left.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

In about an hour the badly smashed boat drifted ashore, with two bundles of clothes which Frenchy had thrown down into the boat.

Our second mate was saved, but was in a very shaky state. Dublin had grabbed him by one of the legs of an old pair of black, cloth pants, and if the pants had not been old and rotten, "Dublin" would have taken that bucko second mate with him.

The leg of the pants carried away at the crotch, and the second mate came to the surface, more dead than alive.

Dublin must have been as strong as a bull, and had no intention of being drowned without taking someone with him.

The Frenchman shared the clothes he had been wise enough to throw into the boat. The second mate got a pair of pants from Frenchy, and I fell heir to the pants with one leg. My wardrobe was thus enlarged somewhat, but not enough to keep one of my legs from getting blistered as the tropical sun beat upon us.

About eleven o'clock we noticed figures on the beach, about a mile from where we were lying. They were gazing out at the wreck, and, no doubt, wondering what treasures would come ashore. Presently they sighted us, and came running down the beach.

Bill Bridgewater was able to speak a few words of their language. He said, "Pani low," and they ran back and brought us water. We drank greedily at first, but were advised to go easy, as it would upset us.

The natives took us to their huts, in a grove of coconut trees. They were hospitable and had a well, but did not want us, for religious and caste reasons, to go near it.

Mr. Jones had a sovereign in his trousers pocket, and



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we enjoyed some rice. It was served to us on big leaves, as they did not wish heathen like us to use any of their utensils.

The carpenter possessed a heavy gold ring, and a native offered in exchange to guide the mate and carpenter to some white man's house. Mr. Jones and the carpenter were stronger than most of us, and took the lead in seeking help.

Our Captain had to be carried, and he looked all in.

A friendly native climbed up a tree and threw some cocoanuts down to us, and that helped a little.

It seemed a cold, unfeeling way to treat shipwrecked men, but they were also poor, and did not know any better.

They were no worse than the owners of the *Great Northern*, who had sent a ship leaking like a basket to sea, with thirty human beings. It was a miracle that we ever reached India, and had ten survivors from the crazy old tub that Ferney and Co. had insured and sent to sea.

Our mate and carpenter reached a railroad station, about seven miles away, but the agent thought they were run-aways or tramp sailors, and would not believe their story.

Someone directed them to a plantation called Florida Hill, which was owned by an American gentleman. He came at once, with carts hauled by oxen, to the banks of the Bassien River.

We crossed at a ford, the natives carrying our Captain, and were taken to Florida Hill, getting there about ten P.M. of that eventful Monday, June eleventh, 1869.

The roads were awful, with ruts a foot deep; and the jolting of the springless dump carts nearly killed us in our weakened condition.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

How that American couple came there I never knew, but they showed us kindness and sympathy which I shall never forget.

They had killed a sheep, and you can imagine how good it tasted to us, who had been nearly six months on salt horse, with an occasional mess of shark or albatross thrown in as tidbits.

After a good supper our host passed around a box of cigars. The world did not seem such a bad place to live in, after all; if our treatment by this lovely, amiable couple was a fair sample of what we might expect.

Although we were only rough sailors, the most unrefined one among us knew that we had met one of God's real gentlemen, as well as one of the finest things God ever made, a true gentlewoman.

I believe that everyone who was saved was grateful to God; and I said my prayers fervently before retiring.

We had all been close to death, and had seen twenty of our shipmates perish before our eyes, and it ought to have had a purifying effect on our lives.

The only pier head jumper who survived was the Wigan collier. He was strong, and a good swimmer. I met him in London eleven months after the wreck.

Poor Mark Hill and John Johnson, and the man who was made the boatswain, were drowned, though they were very good swimmers. Dublin may have drowned one of them.

I was very glad to see the third officer, who tended me like a brother until I was able to help myself.

Sharks will not come into shoal water, and I was told that all the bodies were washed ashore. Coffins were sent from Bombay, and the bodies decently buried. They now



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rest quietly on the shores of the Arabian Sea, just as secure of their rewards as if they slept with their ancestors in Carnarvon.

The pretty boy from Venice, out to see the world, who got thrown aboard the *Great Northern*, as a sailor, so that a boarding house master could collect a month's advance! How would his mother know why he had never come back?

The morning after the wreck our American friend took us in vehicles to a railroad station, ten miles from his home, and we arrived in Bombay about two P.M.

We were kindly received in the sailors' home.

I hurried to the Post Office, still wearing my torn shirt, and the pants with one leg missing; but my lack of clothes did not seem to attract anyone's attention.

Two men approached the mail window as I stood reading my letters. One was Captain Evans of the *Curlew* and the other was Captain Owens of the ship *British Empire*.

Captain Evans was sailing the next day for Rangoon. All his crew were shipped, or he would have gladly included me. Captain Owens needed a man, so I agreed to sail with him to Callao, and back to England.

Captain Evans pressed four rupees into my hand to meet my immediate needs. He had just heard about the wreck, and had been wondering if "Bob" was saved.

News of the wreck was cabled to England, but it was six weeks before the names of the survivors arrived by mail. You can imagine what an anxious time for my parents. Every day Aggie called for news, and Mother used to tell me how the girl comforted her by just saying, "I know Bob is alive."

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

Captain Flarty was in touch with my folks all through the anxious time, and always said, "Don't worry; if ten are saved, he is one of them."

The Captain was then on a yacht owned by Sir William Thomson, the great scientist and inventor, who afterwards became Lord Kelvin.

Every shipwrecked sailor got about ten dollars, and a bundle of clothing, from a fund provided by English merchants.

I was thankful to God for guarding me through the surf, and did not feel like joining in the dissipation into which some of my shipmates were indulging.

The temptation, however, to have what the sailors called a good time, was strong. With no home influences around him, and entirely free to do just what he liked, it was no wonder that many a young man went astray.

I had received a mental, or perhaps a moral, shake-up which did me good; and had a strong desire to fit myself to become a proper mate for the girl in Glasgow.

Captain Renshaw gave me an able seaman's discharge, with "very good" marked on it. He also gave me a written reference.

He spoke very kindly to me at the shipping office, and praised me for going over the stern into the lifeboat, to bail her out.

Evidently he had forgotten the fight with Bill Sykes, and my bruised face when I was brought before him to be reprimanded.

Weakened by his disappointments and long struggle in the surf, Captain Renshaw died on his way home to England.

Three ships, deeply loaded with coal, came out of the



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dock at Birkenhead on the same tide with the *Great Northern*, and not one of them ever gained the port in India for which they cleared.

They were wrecked, but very few lives were lost.

One of them was a four masted, full rigged ship, the *Sarah Sands*, and I remember that she was painted green.

I often wondered how it came about that I was saved, and John Johnson drowned. I never heard him use profanity, and his leisure time on Sunday was spent reading his Bible, or some other good book.

Many of the men who were drowned did not lead good lives. They, like us all, will be judged by the light we have accepted or rejected.

I mourned for Mark Hill more than all the others. I never knew him to do a mean act, and he had a deep respect for religious, or, shall I say, sacred things.

When the news was sent to Mark's Father that his first born was drowned, and his body buried in a wooden box in the sandy shores of the Bay of Bengal, I wonder how he felt. I believe he never afterwards knew a real moment of quiet peace, and was heartily sorry that he had allowed a woman to come between them.

We call the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean "The Rolling Forties" because it is there the sea reaches its most dangerous heights. A man's life at forty-five might well be called the "Perilous Forties." The animal nature seems to dominate more than in early life, and though he may have built a good reputation for moral integrity, is apt to throw it all away. Mark was a boy any father would be proud to own.

Alex Perkins told me that while I was lying sick on the beach after my experience in the surf, that he walked

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along the shore and found my little, blue painted sea chest, containing my love letters, and all my little treasures.

I had lost all but life, young life, which was still mine.

I had been a chosen one, and exulted in the thought that I still had a chance to have the girl I loved in my arms. Nothing like the love of a good woman to keep a man straight. I would have been dead and forgotten long ago if the girl had not stuck by me, and finally led me to give my heart and life into God's keeping.

Mr. Roberts, second mate of the *Curlew*, came ashore to meet me, and was glad to see me alive and well after my struggle.

We were wrecked on Monday, June eleventh, and I was to meet Captain Owens on Wednesday, and learn definitely if he would ship me on the *British Empire*.

I did not see very much of my former shipmates, and I chummed with Alex Perkins and another young man who had been wrecked.

It was necessary for me to get a supply of clothes to last me about a year, and what I bought, and how I bought, may amuse and be of interest.

The clothing dealers had booths along the street, and fairly dragged in their prospective customers. They were called "Bombay Jews," and acted just like the Jews in the vicinity of Division Street in New York, or Paddy's market in Glasgow, or the Briggate, and Saltmarket.

We would select about half a dozen articles, put them in a heap, and ask the dealer, "How much?" His reply would be, "How much you give?" If he asked for twenty-five rupees we would be safe in offering ten. After a lot of barter, the lot would probably be purchased for twelve.



## *The Wreck of the Great Northern*

As the weather in Bombay was pleasant and warm, I never gave a thought to the stormy seas I would have to traverse to get to Scotland again. The heaviest coat I owned when leaving Bombay was a short, alpaca jacket. I bought a pair of low, oxford shoes to serve as sea boots while going round the Horn. The only heavy pants I had were in the bundle of clothes from the fund supplied by English merchants.

It might happen that a high hat and a dress suit would be in the bundle!

When I met Captain Owens on Wednesday he told me to be at the boat landing Saturday morning, to take me to the shipping office to sign articles. I had, therefore, three more days for sightseeing and freedom.

It was amusing to see the little boys and girls running around naked, and to hear them singing London music hall songs, such as "Champagne Charlie is my name."

We had many invitations from very beautiful girls sitting at windows, watching for the white sailors, and their money!

We were just getting over the shock of swimming ashore, and, for a few hours, had a very delightful time with the very charming Bombay lassies. Of course we told them about losing our shipmates, and they were just as sympathetic and kind as girls with a fairer skin. It was so nice to be made much of, and cuddled, after all we had gone through.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Back to London, via Callao*

WE spent three quiet, restful days in Bombay, and when Saturday morning came, my chum and I went to meet Captain Owen at the shipping office. The Captain told me that his boatswain and cook were in jail for insubordination, and that he planned to disrate them to common sailors, and wanted me to ship as cook.

Wages of three pounds a month instead of two pounds ten sounded good to me, but I pleaded ignorant of the cooking job! This fact did not seem to bother the Captain, who said that there was not much to cook, only pea soup and duff, and promised that the steward would teach me.

I thought it was a fishy story, as his officers, boatswain, and cook, as well as himself, were Welsh, and clannish. I questioned that he might re-instate the cook and disrate me. I asked for at least half an hour to consider the matter.

My friend had been tagging behind while this conversation was going on, and he advised me to take the job, but on no account to sign as cook. He also advised me to sign as able seaman for three pounds per month, and tell the Captain that I would agree to cook.

The old Captain, however, insisted that I sign as cook if I was on the articles for three pounds. I was firm, and finally he reluctantly agreed to my proposal.

Then he informed me that he had made special arrange-



## *Back to London, via Callao*

ments for me to occupy a room with the carpenter, as he did not wish me to associate with the sailors, as they were a bad lot.

This was good news to me, and I would likely see some stirring scenes, especially if the officers and sailors were at logger-heads.

A number of my shipmates were at the landing when I joined the Captain to be rowed out to my new home. I climbed up the accommodation ladder after the Captain, and he announced to the chief mate that I was to be the cook.

The chief mate told the Captain that the steward was drunk, having opened the Captain's private store-room to get the liquor, and was lying helpless in his room. The chief mate also reported that another member of the crew was handcuffed to a stanchion, drunk.

This sailor, a Welshman, was rather a hard nut, and was enjoying himself calling the mate loving names!

There were half a dozen cases of whiskey in the row-boat, which was passed up to be stowed away in the Captain's locker, and he advised me to be careful that the two sailors who were helping did not get a chance to steal any, adding, under his breath, "They are a bad lot."

What new mess was I getting into?

Captain Evans must have given me a very fine character, as my new Captain seemed to think that I was an angel. He talked with the mate about the steward, and then, turning to me, said, "I am going to make you steward, and the steward, cook."

I thought to myself, "Well, what am I going to be next?"

I tried to stand up under the honors that were thrust

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

upon me, and felt quite ready to adapt myself to all that came; but, like all Scotchmen, the bawbees, and not the position, was the thing that interested me most.

Our anchor had been hove short, and the topsails loosed, when the Captain and I came aboard; and, in charge of a pilot, we proceeded to sea. As it grew dark we dropped the pilot, and, with nearly all sail set, soon left Bombay behind. The wind was moderate, and I had time to adapt myself to my new surroundings.

The men had their tea, and I served tea to the officers when they were able to leave their duties on deck.

The chief mate was a better judge of character than old Captain Owen, and I could see that he did not take me at the Captain's valuation. He had also heard me remind that Captain that I would expect to get steward's wages. Realizing that I knew nothing about the job, he thought it good evidence that I was pretty cheeky for a boy only eighteen.

But, I did not think of myself as a boy. I had lived the life of a man, and was rated as an able seaman, and felt quite able to fulfil the duties.

The chief mate treated me in a very brusque manner when the Captain was not around, and I noticed that he was the dominant figure on the ship, and the one to enforce discipline. The Captain was old, and, while he was shrewd, and seemed to be running things, there was no physical force behind him. So he had to depend on the mate, a big, handsome brute, six feet two inches tall, and weighing two hundred and forty pounds. His soul seemed to sit secure behind that bone and muscle, and he ignored all kindly advances, and never used moral force. He wore an offensive sneer on his face, and walked with a



### *Back to London, via Callao*

strut in his step. The second mate was a quiet, peaceable man, and had to put up with the bullying propensities of his superior officer.

It is needless of me to say that many difficulties arose while performing the duties of steward, and, under the promptings of the mate, the Captain decided that I had better do the cooking, and return the steward back to the cabin.

I was delighted with the change, for it gave me an opportunity to mingle with the sailors, and enjoy their yarns. The Captain looked cross, however, if he saw me go forward and talk to them.

I had cooked for about a week, and was quite friendly with some of the men. They knew I hated the work, so one of them told me to boil the rice for dinner on Saturday in salt water, hoping that it would be hard and uneatable, and they would carry it aft and complain that the food was not properly cooked.

Of course I cooked only some of the rice that way, so that the men would not be deprived of their dinner.

The scheme worked all right, and they took a young Welshman out of the forecastle, a man who had been disgraced from able seaman to ordinary, with ten shillings a month taken from his wages, and promised to re-instate him if he could do the cooking. He was a sturdy, well educated chap, but, being a native of Swansea in South Wales, was not recognized by the Captain and officers as a real Welshman. The boatswain and cook were also natives of North Wales.

The Captain made an entry in the log book, and witnessed by the mate, that I could not fulfil the duties of

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

cook, and my wages would be the same as an able seaman, two pounds ten.

I was asked if I had anything to say, to which I replied, "No; such things would be adjusted before a shipping master when we were paid off."

The mate recognized the fact that I had put one over on the Captain when I refused to sign the articles as cook. He thought the next best thing to do was to try in some way to disrate me.

My confidants thought that I was very wise not to sign as cook, and I told them who my adviser had been in this matter.

The Captain told me to keep on living with the carpenter, but did not realize that I was one of the bad lot, and not to be trusted as an afterguard, if the mate had any trouble with the crew.

The men seemed determined that some day they would square accounts with this cruel type of mate.

One day Jones, the mate, came strutting along the deck and spied a pot lying outside the galley door, and started abusing young Griffiths, our cook. The cook had said, "All right; as soon as I get through with making the men's tea." He did not say "Sir" to the mate, and that was a mortal offense.

The mate grabbed him, and cuffed him several times with his big paws, and ended by giving him a kick that landed the poor fellow ten feet away on the deck.

When young Griffiths got up, he ran across the deck and into the cook house, coming out with a large carving knife, and went for the mate. The chief ran for the quarter-deck, and the cook had only one chance to make



## *Back to London, via Callao*

a slash at him, which made a cut on the mate's left arm, between the wrist and elbow.

No one interfered, and the mate ran, or fell, down the cabin stairs, but was up in less than a minute with a revolver. He ordered the cook to drop the knife, and told the second mate to put Griffiths in irons, down in the 'tween decks.

The crew were all Welshmen, and looked on the row as a family affair, and would likely favor one another.

The next thing that happened was the putting of the original cook back on his job.

Griffiths was kept in irons for a week, on bread and water, and then put to work as an ordinary seaman. He acted, and looked, crazy, and did not care what happened to him.

He was well educated, and must have come from a good family. He told me that trouble over a girl had driven him from home, and that he was in hopes of making money to right the wrong by marrying the girl.

The boatswain was an ugly looking fellow, and was the next to Mr. Jones in size and strength. He was very cross-eyed, and got ripping mad if anyone said, "Who are you looking at?" He was working as just a foremast hand, and, being on the outs with the mate, was between the devil and the deep sea, and the sailors had no love for him, because he had tried to imitate the mate on the passage from England to Bombay.

Our course by compass was south by east. We had to go south of Australia to run our easting down, just as we did in the *City of Montreal*. When we were in about 38° south latitude it began to blow from the southwest, and increased in force until it became a hurricane.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

This was during July, and winter in the southern seas. We were hove to with nothing but a brand new lower main topsail set, and a fore topmast stay sail, when the wind suddenly shifted to the north west, and blew with greater force than ever.

Our ship had only nine hundred tons of ballast, and she laid on her beam ends while we tried to set the fore topsail, and get her before the wind.

The wind ferociously blew the tops of the seas all over us just like sheets, and it was a dangerous operation for a man called "Gibraltar Bill" and myself to get to the forerigging and get started up, out of the sheets of water that poured over us. Luckily for us the wind lulled for about fifteen minutes, and we managed to get the topsail set, and the ship running at a good gait. The sea grew heavier, and it was necessary to put two men on the wheel.

From eight to ten that night a chap named "English Bill" and I steered the creaking ship. Bill, the older man, went to the weather wheel, and I had only to assist him. At times we had to exert all of our strength to keep the wheel from getting away from us. It was bitter cold, and the Captain was a bundle of clothes covered by oilskins.

The ship was steering badly, and yawing around a couple of points each side of her course. This made the Captain quite anxious, and, when she yawed and brought the sea broad on the quarter, and a wave just filled her decks and carried away one of our boats from on top of the skids, eight feet above the deck, right out of the lashings, and swept it overboard, he insisted that the second mate get another man at the wheel.

The officer realized that I was a good helmsman, and



### *Back to London, via Callao*

told me to take the weather side, and allowed Bill to become my helper. The Captain was satisfied with the change, and was glad, I think, that I was able to keep the ship pretty near to her course.

All hands were called on deck at ten o'clock to set the mizzen topsail, and the upper main topsail. The wind was lessening, and Captain Owen wanted to take advantage of the northwest wind.

When Mr. Jones came on deck and found me at the weather side of the wheel, his face beamed with surprise and disgust. Captain Owen told him that I was a very good helmsman, and could do better than most of the old hands. I was cold, the bitter blasts went through me, but I was proud and quite contented, for I felt that I was showing the mate a thing or two and could endure as much as any of the sailors.

We made to the south very rapidly, and were averaging fourteen knots, for five days, going not only south of Australia, but south of New Zealand.

The cold was dry and biting, and I would have been in bad shape if I had not found two pairs of very heavy woolen pants and shirts in the bundle donated to me in Bombay.

One day my alpaca coat blew away, leaving me only the sleeves; and the low shoes of half paper left my feet bare to stand the cold.

After passing New Zealand we edged away for Peru, steering northeast, and in a week we were in warmer weather, and it was good to be dry again.

One of the ordinary seamen, whose name was Barney, and about my age, became very chummy with me, though he seemed at times very self-contained, and had very little

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

to say. He wanted to become a good sailor, as his life on land had been demoralizing.

He told me that he had never known his father, and that his mother was a shameful type of woman. He was born and brought up in the slums of Liverpool, making his living selling papers, and, as he got older, carried valises around the railroad stations.

However, heredity did not influence his life, as he was one of the cleanest youngsters I have ever met. He would walk away if anyone told an obscene story.

He was a very good boxer, and to him wrestling was an art. He never tired of teaching me how to be proficient in self-defense, and how to throw an opponent.

In return I assisted him in teaching him to read and write, as well as the rudiments of navigation.

We made a compact that if the big mate ever struck either, that both of us would tackle him, and use the first weapon we could grasp. We realized that it was useless to use our hands or feet on that mountain of flesh.

I was growing fast, and weighed about one hundred and fifty pounds. It was rather unsafe for any of the crew to impose on Barney or me.

We made the passage to Callao in seventy-two days, which was considered very good.

The chief mate had never been in Callao, and was ignorant about Jack Brett and his gang. So, when Jack and his chum, Olsen, came alongside, and began talking to the men, the mate ordered them to leave the ship, and became very abusive.

Brett took it all very quietly for some time, but when the mate called him ———, he jumped for him, and



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struck him on the stomach. As the mate wilted under the blow, Brett nailed him under the chin, and knocked him out.

Olsen and Brett then rushed down the accommodation ladder, and when Jones struggled to his feet, half dazed, he immediately went down to the cabin, and returned on deck with his revolver; but Brett had made provision for that, and kept steering the boat right ahead of our bows.

If Jones had been a decent man, the crew would have taken his part.

But now he was mortified, and must have realized that to have friends, one must be friendly. The only one who helped him to his feet was the ex-boatswain, and he was put back to his former position a few days afterward.

The mate made a short speech to the crew, saying that the boatswain was to be obeyed in the work of the ship. Not a word of approval was uttered by the men, who remained in sullen silence.

Chincha Islands hove in sight, and we had plenty of room to moor our ship. Instead of an average of about three hundred ships, as was the case when I was there in 1866, there were anchored only thirty.

The guano was getting cleaned off the islands, and the ships were beginning to load at the Guanopa Islands, which were about fifty miles north of the equator, and in the same longitude as the Chinchas.

It was necessary to keep a man on watch at night, and the Captain insisted that the mate install me in that position.

In about a week one of the sailors was laid up with an injury, and the mate suggested to Captain Owen that this man could sit on the quarter-deck and keep watch, and I

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

could do the handling of the cargo. This lasted only one night, because the Captain came on board the following night, and found the watchman asleep.

He said that none of the bad lot were to be trusted, and told the mate to put Robert, as he called me, as watchman again.

The watching was very monotonous, and I would rather have worked.

One night as I was walking on the poop deck, I looked down into the cabin and saw the steward listening at the cabin stairway, with a large butcher knife in his hand. He was afraid that the officers might come down and catch him opening a case of brandy which had been sent to the Captain from another ship.

He opened the case sufficiently to extract a bottle, then pushed the nails back in place, and tiptoed toward his room, just as I put my head in the skylight and said, "Halfers."

He was in a panic, but soon discovered his friend. We had two drinks, and he finishing the bottle, was not able to get up the next morning.

The mate went to rouse him, and finding the empty bottle, dragged him out of the bunk, and kicked him around. Poor fellow, he had an awful craving for liquor, but he was still kept on as steward, however, as there was no one to take his place.

I have mentioned a man called "Gibraltar Bill" (because he was always referring to the time when he lay at Gibraltar, while in the English Navy). He had a foul tongue, and could belch out torrents of profanity, and the men took a great delight in tormenting him.

One day the crew were engaged in passing baskets of



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guano from a launch into a side port. Gibraltar was filling the baskets, and, as the empty baskets were thrown back, about every second one would hit him. He cursed and swore dreadfully, and said that if another one hit him he would throw it overboard. Within a few minutes Bill promptly threw one overboard.

The chief mate, who was watching the performance, ordered him to come on deck, and as Bill came over the ship's rail, the mate knocked him down, and Bill yelled loud enough to wake me from my daytime sleep. All hands came on deck just in time to see another young sailor jump upon the shoulders of the mate, and deliver a punch in his face.

As English Bill came over the rail he had taken an iron belaying pin out, and said, "Let me get at him." It took only one blow from that pin to bring the mate down, and some of the crew realized that it would mean murder, and trouble for everybody, if the affair went any further, besides with no justice for a poor sailor.

I came on deck as quickly as possible, and was relieved to find that several of the men had sense enough to keep English Bill from striking the mate a second time.

When Gibraltar was again on his feet he drew his sheath knife, but never got a chance to show what he intended to do with it, as my chum, Barney, kicked the knife out of his hand.

The silly old Captain was coming up the gangway ladder when the fracas started, and the mate received his quietus, but he concluded that this was no place for him, and quietly returned to his gig, making the man row away from the ship.

The second mate and the steward, assisted by the

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

boatswain, took the mate into the cabin, and performed the necessary antiseptic duties.

Captain Owen signalled the Captain of an American clipper ship, named the *Cowper*, to send a boat and report a mutiny on his ship, asking for help as soon as possible.

Our Captain came back in about two hours, and found the crew just finishing discharging the guano launch.

That I should remember the name of the ship whose Captain sent a boat to report the supposed mutiny is not so strange, as I had met her when outward bound on the *Great Northern*. She was a gallant looking ship, and was carrying all three top-gallant sails, and main royal; while the old wagon I was in had nothing above her upper topsails set.

Captain Owen told me to keep close watch that night and not to allow any of those villains to come near the cabin. He gave me his revolver, and told me to shoot the scoundrels if they attempted to come up the poop ladder. What a Captain!

The big mate had practised force, and what he had given was returned to him in good measure. If he had played the good will and kindness method, he would not have suffered the humiliation that was his portion now.

I admit that many of the sailors could not have been governed in any other way, and expected brute treatment, through years of continued, unappreciated services.

The British consul and six policemen came next morning, armed with guns and bayonets.

The young sailor who had jumped onto the neck of the mate, and English Bill, were ordered aft, and Gibraltar Bill tagged on behind.



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The trial was held in the cabin, and the verdict of the consul was a month in jail for each of the three.

Gibraltar had been called out of the launch and knocked down, and he was to spend a month in a filthy jail, and also lose a month's pay, besides that of the month he was in jail.

It was as good as a movie to listen to the volley of abuse he heaped on everyone concerned. He called the Captain an old ———, which was somewhat true—and, when the consul told him to shut up, told him that he would see him in ——— first.

The policemen were asked to gag him, and, while they were improvising material, English Bill boiled over his cup of sorrow!

The three men were taken ashore, and we did not see them again until their month was up. This made us three men short, but the owners were in pocket, and, as usual, Jacky Tar got the dirty end of the stick.

No peace or harmony could be expected on our ship now, but only mutual suspicion and distrust.

We finished loading our cargo of twenty-four hundred tons of guano, and went back to Callao, to clear the ship, and have our liberty day before starting for England.

The letters from Glasgow, telling me about the welcome awaiting me, made me long for home.

The girl, with the pull she had on my heart, naturally had the floor. The call of youth was strong in me, and the longing for the sweet moment to come when Aggie would be in my arms grew stronger as the days went by.

Barney and I went ashore on liberty day for the port watch.

I felt like seeing a bit of life, and Barney had drawn

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

only about eight English shillings from the Captain, to buy soap and such articles. I had been more extravagant, and had drawn twenty-five shillings. Barney bought some fruit, and thought that he would just sit down by the wharf and chat.

A man was juggling a pea under three cups (they called him a thimble-rigger) and as I watched him, thought that I could easily tell what cup it was under, and maybe win ten shillings. Two of our crew came along, just as I placed my five shillings. So as to rope them in, the old fellow allowed me to win.

Just as the juggler surmised, they bet on the next round, and lost. The juggler expected me to take another chance, but nothing doing; I had seen the game before when in Callao, and had made enough to give me a good night ashore; so I proudly walked away with my easy money. I could hear abusive words, and I dreaded a row in Callao, when I thought of the night I had spent in jail when I was on the *City of Montreal*.

The port watch had many stories to tell about liberty night. Very few of them had been bilked by the Peruvian girls, but rather enjoyed the time.

They were young men, full blooded, and had been away from home nearly a year, often cold and hungry, and often reefing a topsail, for two hours at a time. I would like to know who could blame them for looking forward to a night spent with girls who made them think that they were the only ones they ever loved.

I would like to say right here that the sailors belonging to that port watch received better treatment from the dark-skinned Peruvian girls than they would get from the girls they consorted with in the East End of London, or



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in Hull, or around the Bromielaw, or Briggāe in Glasgow. In those districts, the lowest class of women are found, and for duplicity their equal cannot be found anywhere. Lying in wait to devour and destroy any sailor, especially if he is home from an eighteen months' voyage.

My readers may think that I am overstating the case, and that such degraded women never existed, but, believe me, they did, and their kind still live and carry on their trade in a more refined way.

The men in Callao that I found in and around the homes of the women I am writing about were as low down, mean a class of pimps as you could imagine. Some of them were the husbands of the girls who made a living for them by loving and caressing a different sailor every night, as they came ashore from the old wooden ships.

Business was good in their line, when there used to be three hundred ships loading guano at the Chincha Islands. Those were the good old days, when we were young.

We left Callao three days before Christmas, with orders to call at Queenstown to receive instructions for delivery of our cargo.

Our mate had been tamed, but not in a fair fight, and he was still quite surly in his manner. However, he didn't attempt to drive the men very much by giving them unnecessary work to do, as this would have very likely resulted in someone dropping a block or a marlinspike on his head.

If he had been big souled enough to call the crew aft and tell them that he had been wrong in his attitude toward them, and promise that for the remainder of the voyage, as far as he was concerned, they would get fair

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

treatment, and ask them for their co-operation, what a difference it would have made!

Of course, to make peace he would have been obliged to tell them that the three men who had been in jail would not be docked a month's pay, and that their fines would be remitted. Had he made an overture like this, the sailors might have thought he had gone nutty.

We poked our way along toward Cape Horn, but did not sight the land, and rounded the Cape thirty-eight days out from Callao.

While lying in the guano islands I had made sea boots with oiled canvas tops, and wooden soles, which I painted to keep out the water. It was quite cold around Cape Horn, but mild compared to the winter season, so that I was really more comfortable than on the passage from Bombay to Callao.

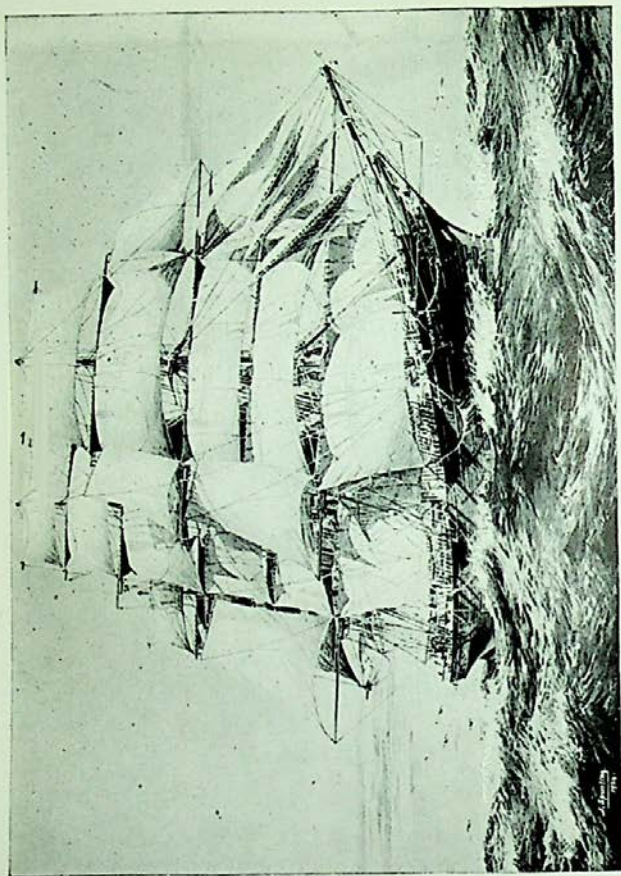
The British consul put a man on our ship to be carried to England. The consul had the power to make a British ship carry, as a passenger, anyone who had been left in a hospital from a British ship.

The only name I remember this man by was Jim. He had contracted a venereal disorder in Hull, England, and, through neglect, had to be sent to the hospital in Callao.

He was rather a refined chap, quiet and gentle in his manner, and we all liked him. Imagine putting a man on a ship that would be four or five months on the passage to England, to live on salt meat, when the doctors had said he was incurable. No hope for the poor fellow, no efficient care, such as he would have received in the better days I have lived to see. We cared for him, and gave him whatever we could get in the way of fresh tinned meat. He was so far gone, when we reached







*The Cutty Sark*  
FROM THE PAINTING BY JACK SPURLING



## *Back to London, via Callao*

London, that they smothered him. I have no doubt that someone loved and mourned for him, and never knew how he died.

We had baffling winds from the Horn until we got into the southeast trades, with pleasant weather to the equator.

We were right on the line on March twenty-first, and, becalmed, the sun at noon was like a ball of fire directly over us, and teasingly poured its rays of heat upon us, boiling the pitch out of our deck seams.

We caught two turtles, one of them very old, and covered with barnacles. We enjoyed eating him, however, and the soup made quite an addition to our scanty larder.

Before we ran into the northeast trades we had thunder and lightning storms.

When we were about six degrees north of the line we sighted a ship astern, and in four hours she was on our beam, and proved to be the famous tea clipper *Cutty Sark*.

She was homeward bound from Shanghai; and had been built in Greenock in 1868, and was on her second voyage, making a record averaging thirteen and one quarter knots from London to the equator. She was carrying all sail, including three skysails, and I think she was the prettiest piece of marine architecture I was ever privileged to see. The comparison was depressing when I thought of our ship, which was covered with barnacles, and only able to make nine knots. The *Cutty Sark* must have been going fourteen and a half.

Next day the wind hauled from northeast by east, to N.N.E., and we were heading northwest. The wind was freshening, and, while we made good headway, it was in the wrong direction. We lost the trades, and were hop-

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

ing to get a westerly wind to carry us home, but the wind came from E.N.E., and not very strong.

One of the old hands in the forecabin told about having an easterly wind for six weeks, and that the crew were starving for lack of provisions.

Even Barney and I developed the blues, and everyone was disgruntled. Then the boatswain struck Barney, in a fit of ill temper, and I banged the boatswain on the nose and mouth with a heavy, iron-bound water bucket. The Welsh cook came from the galley and felled me with a ladle. Barney was sailing into the boatswain, and, in spite of his size, would have licked him, when the mate came from the quarter-deck on the run, and hurled Barney aside.

The boatswain was a sight. He had lost two teeth, and was bleeding from nose and mouth. The sailors in our watch gathered round, and told the mate not to strike Barney or me, or there would be worse happen to him than the experience in the Chincha Islands.

Barney and I were taken before the Captain, who threatened to put us in irons; but when I told him that the boatswain had struck Barney, he changed his mind about the irons. Then the Captain wanted to know what business of mine it was if the boatswain saw fit to chastise Barney, and why should I disfigure the boatswain?

I was cheeky enough to tell him that it was hard to disfigure him, as his mug was ugly before I hit him.

The wind stayed in the northeast for three weeks, and we were put on half allowance of bread and meat. The only thing of which we had our full allowance was rice—and sailors don't consider rice very nourishing.

Four of the sailors and the boatswain were laid up with



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scurvy, and it was very fortunate that our route would not take us near the land, with winter weather, and so short-handed.

I tried to get the steward to admit that Captain Owen had a stock of tinned meats and soups in his private store-room.

I had learned, while serving as steward, that the key of the mate's room fitted the Captain's store-room, so I determined to risk going into the cabin, which could be entered from the main deck, and Barney was to keep watch and give a shrill whistle if the mate went toward the cabin. I was not afraid of the Captain hearing me opening the store-room door, as I knew he would double lock his door inside, with suspicions that some of the men had come to murder him.

As I unlocked the door, and crossed the cabin and replaced the key in the mate's door, I slipped into the store-room and struck a match to locate the tinned goods. I carried a small gunny bag, and took seven small cans of soup, and tried quietly to shut the store-room door, but the catch clicked, and the fat was in the fire.

The Captain knocked on the deck for help, and, while the mate went down the companionway, I flew out the main deck door, putting the bag in the forecabin in a jiffy.

Before the Captain could open his door, and tell the mate what had happened, Barney and I were sitting on a spar, and, when the mate came looking for the robber, he concluded that we were not guilty. He questioned us, however, and wanted to know who had run forward. We denied all knowledge of the affair.

The steward and second mate were found asleep in

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

their bunks, and all was serene. We had only a few confidants who knew about the robbery, and not one of us ever tasted the soup, because it was kept for sick Jim's use, and the men who had scurvy got the remainder.

The little Welshman who succeeded me as cook had scurvy in a very virulent form, and died a week before we got to Queenstown.

His gums were all gone, and he could not eat, so quietly passed away.

We were off Queenstown Harbor on the twenty-fourth of May, and the crew insisted that we run in for provisions, since we had only one half cask of fat pork, and about one hundred and fifty pounds of bread.

Stored up with bread, potatoes, and vegetables, we happily left next day.

A pilot boat came off and gave the Captain orders to proceed to London. We were seven days on the passage, before we would realize being on shore once more, and of seeing our loved ones. With this expectation I soon forgot all that I had endured since leaving the dock in Birkenhead, eighteen months before.

Our sick men, including Jim, were sent to the hospital.

Before we left the *British Empire* a list of names was given to the Captain, with a request that he deduct from our wages the amount designated opposite our several names, and send the total to the hospital for Jim's benefit. The amount was fifteen pounds.

Jim died, however, and the money was not deducted.

Tailors, shoemakers, and boarding house keepers came on the ship, offering us all sorts of kindnesses, and they all had a bottle.



## *Back to London, via Callao*

I went, with a few others, to the sailors' home, and did not buy clothes, or dissipate my money in old, sailor fashion.

My shipmates took me to the houses they were living in, and introduced me to their new wives. There was always a stray girl pining for a young sailor like me, but I was wise enough to keep out of any serious entanglements.

Our third day ashore was pay day, and after paying my bill in the sailors' home, and getting an order on the sailors' home in Glasgow for all my wages, I hurriedly left on a boat for Leith, where I took the train for home, sweet home.

I had not written, but my folks, and Aggie, knew that we had arrived. Aggie used to visit our house every morning to get the news, and the morning of my arrival had come as usual.

When we met she fell on my breast and wept as if her heart would break. I tried to calm her, and between sobs she cried, "Oh, Bob; I thought you never would come back."

Aggie was short in stature, but plump, and she did look sweet to me, with her auburn curls encircling her winsome face.

It was a delicious time in my life, and I just picked her up in my arms, and hugged and kissed her, and it did seem that a little bit of heaven was our portion that morning.

I had grown tall, but thin from the lack of food on the *British Empire*. Good food would soon remedy that, however.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

My folks made me very comfortable, and just loved and cuddled me, for three long weeks.

Aggie and I spent together all the time we possibly could, but never with the approval of her parents, who still thought me rather wild, and then—I was a sailor.



## CHAPTER IX

### *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

AFTER buying suitable clothing I had twenty-five pounds left, including the money I had sent from Bombay. Ambition was developing within me, and I was determined to progress to the position of mate, then a Captain, and claiming Aggie as the climax. Well, it would be a stony road, filled with many ruts and detours, but with nineteen years to my credit I felt able to take a man's place, but there was no one to guide or suggest the best route to take.

Many of the pupils in the senior high school nowadays are nineteen, and dependent on their parents. I had to acquire education enough to fit me for being a master mariner, when I was thirteen.

The youth of today should do well, both mentally and physically, as they have had every opportunity to develop.

I decided to look for a ship, and my ambition was to get one in the Western Ocean trade, running to Montreal or New York.

A rakish looking, tall sparred ship called the *Gleniffer* arrived from Montreal. She flew the "Allan Line" house-flag, and I went aboard and found Cummins, the chief mate.

Perhaps there are a few old timers who will remember him. He was a small man, but very energetic and active. After looking me over he asked to see my discharges, and, when he found that I had an able seaman's discharge from

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

the *Great Northern*, and had served eleven and one half months on the *British Empire*, could scarcely say that I was too young. He told me to be at the shipping office the next day to sign on. I had ascertained from Harry Lynch that the mate was very particular about the men he hired, and could get his choice, as the ship fed the men very well. He added that the Captain was a devil to carry sail.

Harry Lynch, you remember, was an old shipmate on the *City of Montreal*, and the man that Charley McBride had beaten up with a pair of brass knuckles. So, I invited Harry to have a drink, and he invited two other cronies to join us, and told them how small I was when he first met me, hoping that I would "shout" again if he talked long enough.

But, I hurried home to tell the folks about my new ship, and that night Aggie and I sat together planning our future and she so grateful that I was only going to Montreal.

Captain Jarman was a hard-bitten mariner, and he watched every move of the ship. A ship belonging to the Allan Line, named the *Abeona*, sailed one day ahead of us for Montreal. She was three hundred tons larger, and very much faster with a fair wind. We sighted her before reaching Cape Race, Newfoundland, and, as we were closehauled on the wind, were able to beat her. We made the passage from Glasgow wharf to the wharf in Montreal in twenty-four days. Spending nine days in Montreal, and sixteen days on the homeward run; so we had only forty-nine days' pay due us.

On the passage home we had a stiff breeze, and one day carried away the weather upper fore-topsail brace.



## *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

Orders were given by the mate to carry aloft a new, four-inch rope, and hurry out on the yard and make it fast. Several men were assisting, and were taking the weight of the rope, but I carried the end, and crept out on the yard to complete the job.

The Captain would not take in the top-gallant sail, or lower the topsail yard, in case he would lose any time on the passage. I had a hard task, but accomplished it.

A tackle was put on this rope, and the yard secured, without any reduction in our speed. Jarman was watching every move, and noticed that it was a young, boyish looking sailor who went out on the quivering yard. I slept well that night, and dreamed they called me "Captain."

The third mate was discharged in Glasgow for indiscretions while in Montreal. I applied for the berth, and was a proud lad when the folks at home heard that I was third mate of the fast clipper ship *Gleniffer*.

Dan McCaffrey was the name of the man whom I succeeded. He was about twenty-six years of age, and a thorough sailor—also a hard nut. He would fight on the slightest provocation, and I did not see how I could fill his shoes. The second mate was quite a little bucko in his way, and I was quite concerned as to how I would get on with him. His name was Geordie Chrystie.

The boatswain's name was Jamie Hamilton, who was another well trained sailor, and who knew how to lead men.

A few of the men who were in the *Gleniffer* when I was before the mast, shipped on her again, and I had to be most diplomatic, and avoid dictating to them how a job

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

should be done, often allowing them to do it their own way.

On my first voyage as third mate we carried prize cattle to Montreal for breeding purposes. We had three large bulls, and seven cows, also two rams and ten sheep. The shippers seemed to prefer sending their stock on the *Gleniffer*, rather than a steamer.

We delivered them in good condition, and had all the milk we could use on the voyage. What a difference between starving on the *British Empire*, and the plentiful food on my new ship!

We had a full cargo, and were ten days in Montreal, waiting on some special cargo. The *Abeona* left three days ahead of us, and, knowing that she was faster than our ship, with favorable winds, we guessed she would get to Glasgow five days before us.

We were fourteen and a half days on the passage when it came on to blow from the northwest. Captain Jarman figured that we were between the Island of Islay and the Mull of Cantyre. We were ordered to put double gaskets on the sails, while the boatswain was on the foremast, and I on the main, to see that everything was secure.

It blew a hurricane that night, as we lay to on that dangerous coast. There was not a rag on her except the lee-wing of the lower main topsail. What a responsible position a Captain of a sailing ship had under such conditions; and our Captain was one good, old-time sailor-man.

Just here I want to say that I met an old pilot in Gourock, when I visited the old country three years ago, who knew Captain Jarman, and also Cummins; and I did get a real thrill in meeting him, and talking over the old



## *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

sailing ship days. He also told me how a great many of my old shipmates died, and how few were left.

I am hoping that a great many of my young readers have good atlases, and will look up just the position we were in, that dark, dirty, October night.

I had not the slightest fear for the safety of our ship, and I did not hear anyone express themselves doubtfully.

At daybreak all hands were served with a good, stiff tot of rum, and then sail was set as quickly as possible. The gaskets, buntlines, and clewlines were eased away gradually, and the weather side of the lower main topsail set. The fore topsail, and fore topmast staysail were set, and "Up helm, and let her go up the channel for Greenock."

The gale was moderating, and just ahead we could see the Mull of Cantyre. A wonderful landfall, and yet we had not seen the sun for four days, to get our true position.

I am not crying down the men of this generation who bring the giant steamers into the Chelsea Docks in North River, New York. But, they have wonderful aids to navigation, however, compared to those few helps which were in use in 1870. What I do affirm is this—that "there were giants in those days" about which I am writing.

I was wishing for the day to come when I could pace the deck like Captain Jarman, and have the knowledge and skill he possessed.

Being sure of his position now, the Captain crowded all the sail on, and she just flew up the channel.

A ship was sighted to leeward, close to the Ayrshire coast, which proved to be the *Abeona*. She had narrowly

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

escaped destruction, being caught by a northwester too close to land. She was carrying a main top-gallant sail, while we had the main royal set, having a freer wind. A large towboat was in sight, coming toward us, but we ignored it, and did not take sail off until we got to Lamlash. The towboat got our hawser aboard as we passed the Cloch Light, and, it being flood tide, we proceeded up to Glasgow, and docked just fifteen days and twenty-one hours from the wharf in Montreal.

While we lay to in the fierce gale, to leeward of Islay, a tragedy of the sea was being enacted about twenty-five miles away.

The Anchor Line steamship *Cambria* was bound from New York to Glasgow, via Moville, and went on the rocks around the island of Instrahull. Three hundred and fifty men, women, and children lost their lives. A life boat with one man, who was a steerage passenger, came ashore at the entrance of Derry Lough. This man could not tell how he got into the boat, or how the wreck occurred.

There was no one on whom to put the blame, and the Captain and all aboard were gone. Rushing to make a quick passage he lost his life, just because he did not heave his ship to, and wait for daylight. He was noted for being a pusher, and a driver, and had risen from boat-swain to Captain in seven years. I could tell of many more ships which went like the *Cambria*, just by the Commander trying to make a record passage.

I give the date of this wreck, entirely from memory, as the ninth of October, 1870.

When the *Abeona* got to the wharf it was found that her bowsprit was gone, that is, cracked, nearly all the way round, close to the bow. Had it gone entirely she would



### *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

probably have lost her foremast, at least, and likely the ship would have been lost.

I am not giving the name of her Captain, but merely state what happened to him. He was discharged from the Allan Line because the *Gleniffer* beat him three days on the passage home, without carrying away a ropeyarn, and for losing his bowsprit.

Privately, I think the Allan Line had another reason—drink.

Many a bright man had the same disease.

James and Alexander Allan were the leading directors in the Scottish Temperance League in Glasgow when the office of that society was located at 108 Hope Street. I wonder how many are living now who remember that?

Some months later the former Captain of the *Abeona* took command of a ship called the *Lake Erie*. She was a narrow gutted brute, as we used to call ships which had insufficient beam, or width. In December, 1871, he left New York with a load of barreled flour, and was never seen again. When the *Lake Erie* was loaded, and ready for sea, the Captain could not be found for a full day.

Nearly all flour was exported in barrels in those days, and great care had to be taken in stowing, and dunnage boards placed every few tiers. If the bottom barrels squashed, in a squall at sea, with the ship lying over, a tender ship like the *Lake Erie* was sure to capsize. Stevedores had to be watched by both Captain and mates, or they would try to make money quickly by skimping the job.

A squall likely struck the *Lake Erie*, and shifted the cargo, the boat capsizing with no chance for anyone to save themselves in the bitter, cold, December weather.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

A barque rigged vessel left New York on the same day as the *Lake Erie* and she also disappeared in the mighty deep. Is it possible that the two ships collided?

I had a good time in Glasgow among my kinfolk and friends, and with my Aggie. She had to invent ways to meet me without her folks knowing. The opposition of her parents toward me only made her cling to me all the more, but the situation was a source of worry to me, as I knew she was not happy in her home life.

Good food, and a love for my work, made me physically strong, and I was acquiring confidence in handling men, and if any sailor tried to impose on me because I was young, he had to be able to lick me, so with a weight of one hundred and sixty pounds, a fight was a real job to a fresh guy!

A sailor gave me a saucy answer one day, on my first trip as an officer, and the second mate, Geordie Chrystie, said that if I did not lick the fellow, or try to, he would lick me. I had no trouble in getting away with him, as he was only a wind bag. When the men on our next trip heard that I could fight if forced to, I had no trouble in getting the work done, and my orders were obeyed quickly.

The next trip of the *Gleniffer* was to New York, and I was thrilled at the thought of seeing wonderful New York! Before we left Glasgow the shore gang sent down our long top-gallant masts and put up what we called stump top-gallant masts. Nothing but westerly gales were expected, as we made away on October twenty-third.

On all my voyages there had been some of my folks at the wharf to see me off, but when we left for New York, only my sweetheart's presence was needed to cheer me,



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and create within me a determination to work hard up the ladder to the name of Captain.

It would be some job to break down the opinion held by Aggie's parents that I was not a good mate for their daughter, but as I sailed away, a prayer of faith and courage possessed me.

About two days out from Greenock the wind came from the northeast, which was a very unusual thing for the end of October. Our Captain was crazy, because we had the short top-gallant masts up, while the long ones were lashed down in the hold, covered with cargo, and we could not get them out.

We did get lower and topmast stunsail booms out, and set the stunsails, and though it came on to blow, Captain Jarman would not give the order to take them in, and we carried them until the booms carried away.

The northeaster lasted for six days, and that gave us a good boost ahead.

The gallant clipper ship *Flying Cloud* passed us, carrying her royals and main skysail yard, but did not have stunsails set. We were logging thirteen and a half knots, and she must have been making over fifteen.

We exchanged signals, and, as she was bound to New York, asked her to report us. The *Flying Cloud* was then about twenty years old, and in her best days had made the passage from New York to Frisco in eighty-nine days.

Of course I have had to tell my three grandchildren all about the race between the *Flying Cloud* and the saucy little *Gleniffer*.

We had strong westerly and northwest winds the remainder of the passage. Few ships could beat the *Gleniffer*, beating against the wind. Even in a half gale,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

and nothing higher than the topsails set, she made no leeway, or drift sideways.

I had heard, from men who had been in the clipper ships of the Black Ball and other lines, of the New York pilot boats and how they raced against each other, endeavoring to put the pilot on board incoming ships.

To our surprise we sighted a small schooner racing toward us. We had a fresh breeze, but were carrying all sail. The name of the pilot boat was the *J. D. Jones* or *J. E. Jones*. It looked like a daring thing to do in the month of November, to come two hundred miles out from Sandy Hook in the small pilot boats of 1870. They did not look to be more than seventy-five feet long. This pilot boat was handled very skillfully, and a yawl was launched which brought the old pilot under our lee, and we were treated to a sight of a real, New York pilot.

I met many of them in after years, and found many missing through being drowned, boarding ships, or caught outside in a blizzard. They were a brave, well trained body of men.

Times are changed for everyone in this new world, and steam pilot boats took the place of the small schooners thirty years ago.

Sometimes it is blowing too hard to launch a boat and take the pilot off, on the way out of the harbor. He then becomes the guest of the vessel on her trip to Europe, and has to take a holiday.

Climbing aboard the *Gleniffer* was easy for a pilot, compared to climbing up a rope ladder on the leviathans of the sea nowadays—such boats as the *Majestic* or the *Leviathan*.

We were glad to see the pilot, and, as the wind was



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northwest, we made a long leg on the port tack, and when we tacked ship made a short leg on the starboard tack. Our Captain kept control of the ship, and drove her so hard that when he was forced to take in the flying jib we lost a fine, young fellow belonging to the Island of Stornaway, off the jib boom, when she dipped her bowsprit clear under a mammoth wave.

The rule on easy going ships used to be to keep off about two points, and make it safe for the men while stowing a jib when close hauled on the wind.

Captain Jarman did not like to see the *Flying Cloud* pass him, and when the wind came to the westward he cherished the hope of overtaking her, when it came to beating to windward.

Just as we sighted what is now called the "Ambrose Light Ship" we also sighted a full rigged skysail yard ship, which proved again to be the *Flying Cloud*. The breeze was freshening, and our lee rail was often under water. The pilot tried to get the Captain to take in the fore top-gallant sail, but the sight of the *Flying Cloud*, and the desire to get in ahead of her, was strong.

The Captain paced the poop with nervous steps, and suddenly gave the order to clew up the fore top-gallant sail. The *Flying Cloud* was on our beam to leeward, and had taken in her fore top-gallant sail ten minutes before us. A squall struck us just as we passed the Light Ship, and our Captain gave the order to let go the main top-gallant halliards, but did not say to clew it up and furl it, until he saw the main top-gallant mast of the *Flying Cloud* carry away. What a sight to see!

It was a close race, but we passed Sandy Hook half an hour ahead. The pilot had full charge from the Light

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

Ship, and engaged a tug after we passed the narrows; and docked in Brooklyn twenty-two days and nine hours from Glasgow.

We were all mighty proud of our little packet, and had a great many visitors to see the ship which had done so well.

Our pilot had given the papers an account of the race in, past Sandy Hook, with the *Flying Cloud*. We had made the passage two and a half days quicker than the *Flying Cloud*, and, with our Captain's usual luck, had not carried away any masts.

I enjoyed my visit to New York, and old Castle Garden at the Battery was then in full swing.

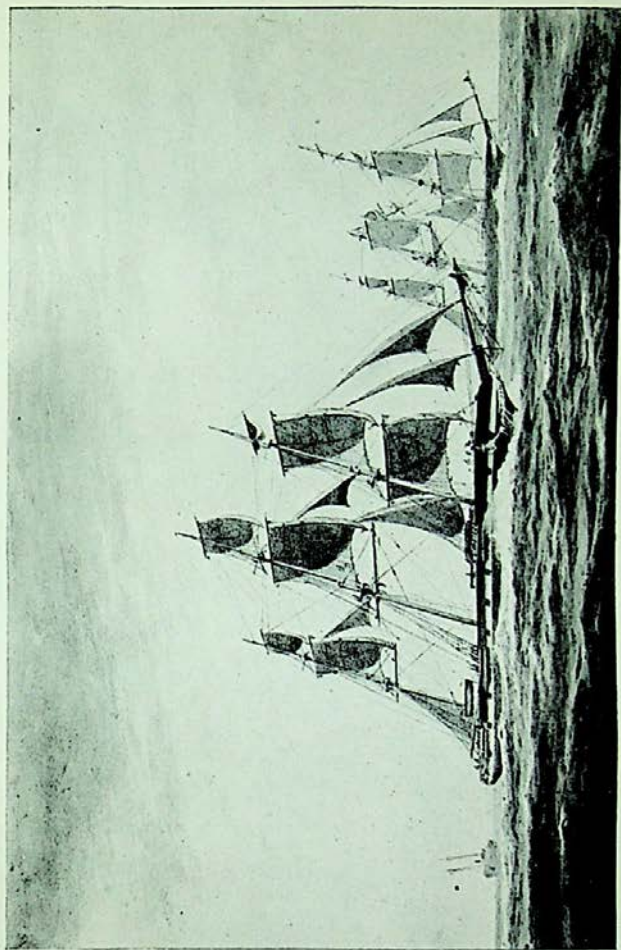
Up around Sixtieth and Seventieth Streets rich men were building mansions; while squatters had shanties perched on ledges of rock, claiming squatters' rights. For outside sheathing the shanties were usually covered with old tin cans, beaten out flat. I saw shanties like that in uptown New York, as late as 1882. It did seem strange to see such places so near the fine residences, with goats climbing rocks and trying to get some sustenance out of the grass that grew in the crevices.

We left New York on December first, deeply loaded with wheat. Some of the wheat was bagged and placed on top of the loose wheat, to keep it from shifting. Evidently not enough had been bagged, as the grain shifted when we got out into heavy weather.

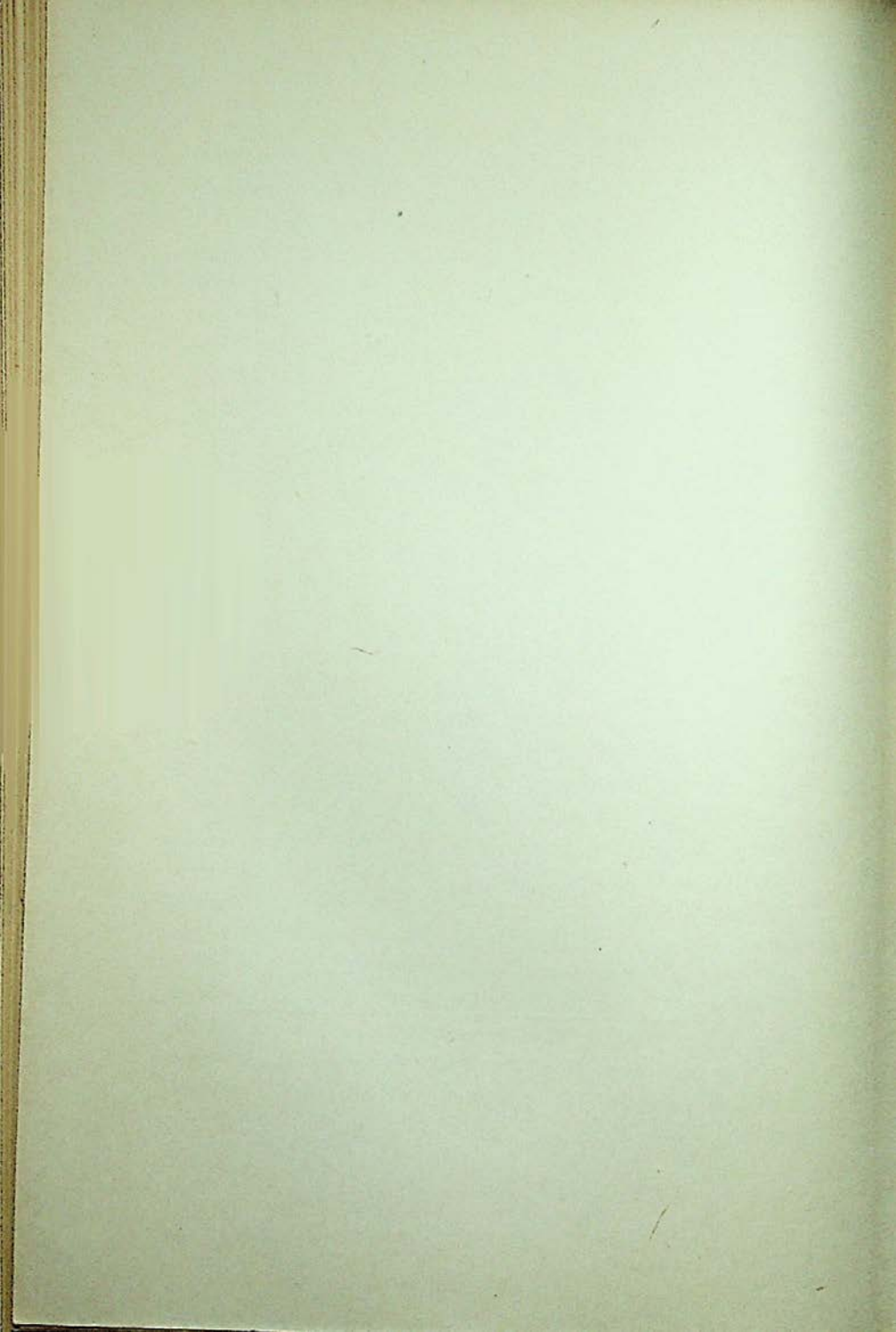
Even the Captain came down in the after end, where I had the starboard watch throwing grain to windward with shovels, trying to take the list out of her.

We put up shifting boards, and filled more bags. The Captain told the second mate, who was supposed to see





THE *Flying Cloud* AND THE *Glenniffer* RACING PAST SANDY HOOK  
AS DRAWN BY WARREN SHEPPARD





### *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

that the stevedore secured the cargo properly, that he had not looked after his work. That caused a rupture, and Geordie Chrystie left when the ship arrived in Glasgow. He was a high-spirited chap, and a thorough sailor. He became a harbor-master in Glasgow, where I met him wearing a tall hat, with frock coat and brass buttons. The Clyde Trust paid for all that uniform.

We docked in Glasgow on December twenty-fourth, and my brother Willie was at the wharf to inform me that my Father had typhus fever, and had taken the turn that day, with the doctor expecting him to recover.

Father became unconscious during the night, however, without recognizing me, and passed away.

It was a great grief to me, arriving home expecting to greet him and tell the story of my voyage.

He was so proud of me as third mate on the *Gleniffer*; and now that I could tell him good news, and had pleased the Captain so well that he promised to make me second mate if I passed the board and got a second mate's certificate, he was past rejoicing over his boy's career. I had waited long to tell all these things to Father.

The *Gleniffer* laid up for the winter, and, as I lacked one month's service to complete the four years required by the board of trade before a second mate's certificate is awarded, I made a trip on the Allan Line steamer *Corinthian* to Portland, Maine.

A young man who had made a trip with me to New York, named Black, also shipped in the *Corinthian*. He, like myself, was planning to go to school with the hope of passing the board for a second mate's certificate.

We were after new experience, and going in a steamer

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

was decidedly new. We were just like two school boys, out to have a good time.

Like all the Allan and Anchor Line steamers of that day, the *Corinthian* was barque rigged, and also had fore and aft sails like a schooner. There was plenty of work for the sailors, taking in and setting sail, but we had steam winches to do the real work.

More than half our crew were middle aged men who knew the ropes aboard a steamer, and how to dodge any work that was disagreeable. In hoisting sails, one of these old codgers would get to the winch and stand by to turn on the steam, while we were slushing around in the cold, icy water, leading the halliards to the winch.

Black and I soon became wise to the curves, and hurried to the winch first. The old fellows, as we called them, thought we had our gall with us, to attempt such tricks on our first voyage in a steamer.

The weather was intensely cold, and, Portland being so far north, the ice formed into a solid mass on the iron rails and forecastle head, and hung down to the deck in solid spears. The seas coming over the bows coated us with ice forward as high as our topsail yard. Our ship was so down by the head that we had to slow down until we beat the ice off with iron bars and shoveled it overboard.

The *Corinthian* made very bad weather of it, as she was a steamer that had been lengthened sixty feet in the middle, to increase her carrying capacity. The seas recognized that she was out of proportion, and seemed to trip her, and, before she recovered from the rush of one sea, another was tumbling aboard.

The main deck of the steamer had long, narrow alley-



### *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

ways, and the sea sometimes washed us along them. Several men got hurt in this way. She claimed to be a pioneer steamer, and served her day while improvements in both hulls and engines were being made.

It was a hard, cold trip, but did us no harm. It was just another phase of sea life. We had plenty to eat—fresh bread every day, lots of butter, oatmeal porridge for breakfast, and scouse for supper, made of potatoes and meat left from dinner.

On our return trip we were sent to Liverpool, and that gave me an opportunity to see my old friends.

Upon my return to Glasgow I went to navigation school for three weeks, and practised doing the sums, and working out how to find the latitude and longitude by the sun, moon, and stars. The English examiners were very strict, and it was quite a job to get through successfully. If a man failed in navigation he had to go back to school and try again, in a week or two. If he failed in seamanship, that is, in answering the questions correctly, which were put by the old examiner, he had to go to sea three months more. These questions referred to the handling of a ship, and trimming of sails under specified conditions.

I had lost my discharges from the *City of Montreal*, and the *Curlew*, and had to get them renewed to prove my sea service of four years. References were also demanded by the examiner, to the effect that the applicant was a sober man, and a fit character to be second mate of a ship. I thought it would be a good stroke of business to ask Alexander Allan for a reference, as I could not get in touch with Captain Biggam, the *City of Montreal* being on a voyage.

I called at the Allan Line office, and, without any

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trouble, got an interview with the man who, five years before had placed me on my first ship. I told him what I wanted, and mentioned the name of his old friend, the Rev. Alexander Wallace, who had given me a letter of introduction when I first went to sea.

Mr. Allan did not think the reference meant very much, and I didn't either, at the time, but when I saw the expression on the examiner's face, I could see at once that it was worth something.

The old examiner thought I must be a very close friend of the Allan family. I watched a chance, and, when the examiner turned his back, picked up the reference, and slipped it back into my pocket. If he missed it, he said nothing.

My navigation problems were O.K., and next day I passed the seamanship tests, and was granted a license to go as second officer on any steam or sailing ship, carrying either freight or passengers. I thanked the old gentleman when he gave me the paper that entitled me to get the certificate from the Board of Trade. Everybody said that he was an old crank, and just loved to tell young chaps that they had failed. I did not find him so, but in my heart I gave Mr. Allan's reference credit for my success.

How I wished Father was at the fireside that night. Aggie was delighted, as she knew her brother, who was friendly with me, would surely tell her Father and Mother that Bob Ramsay was getting on in his profession.

The *Gleniffer* sailed on March twenty-fifth for Montreal, but I did not get through for second mate until the fifth of April. This disarranged my plans—not going with Jarman as second mate.

There was a guiding hand in my life, and the love for



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change and adventure seemed to be grained into my nature.

The present Captain of the splendid Anchor Liner *Transylvania*, David W. Bone, has written a few books. One of them is entitled *The Brassbounder*. Officers on steamers have always been "brass bound." The gilt bands which are on the marine officer's cap and sleeves, and also the two rows of gilt buttons on the front of his frock coat, and the six buttons on tails of the coat are precious symbols of service.

Was it the brass that struck my fancy, or was it the idea of a change to a steamship officer, which led me to take the ferry, and cross the Clyde from the North to the South side, and walk boldly up to Captain Wylie, the Allan Line Marine Superintendent, and ask for a position as fourth officer on his liner?

I handed him a reference from Captain Jarman, which was complimentary, but, having only a second mate's certificate, and I only third officer on the *Gleniffer*, it did not seem to cut any ice with him, as he looked at my boyish face.

Very casually, I drew Alexander Allan's reference out of my pocket, as the dear old soul shook his head, signifying that it was simply out of the question for me to be applying for the fourth officer's position on the *Ottawa*. (There were four men after the position who had either Captain's or first mate's licenses.) I passed the paper to him, and pretended to be looking the *Ottawa* over, to determine whether or not I would care to be an officer on her.

That reference took all the shake out of Captain Wylie's head. I could see that he was puzzled, but did not dare ask if I was a cousin or how nearly related I was to the man who wrote the reference.

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The Marine Superintendent, not the Captain, had the power of appointing the officers. The Captain of the *Ottawa* was on the quarter-deck, and Captain Wylie beckoned him to come ashore.

The Superintendent told him that this was a young man applying for the fourth officer's position. The Captain did not deign to notice me, and, I imagine, was saying, "What scum of the earth is this, looking for a job?" until Captain Wylie handed him the reference, and, as he read it, his face became human, and he put out his hand. I very gingerly shook it.

It was hard to tell who I was. I might be the scion of some wealthy family, if not a relative of the Allan family. Of course I got the position.

"When would I join the ship," I asked; and they both said, in one breath, "Tomorrow morning, if it suits *you*." They did not say, "Your Highness." Captain Archer told me that he had never known of a good third or fourth officer, though he admitted that once upon a time he had filled those lowly positions.

Well, I had carried the thing through, and had made a success of getting a job as a brassbounder, but I did not feel elated over it. Captain Archer held on to that sheet of paper, and, even with all the gall I had, I did not have sufficient to demand its return. He took it to the office and the next morning informed Mr. Allan that the young man to whom he had given the fine reference was fourth officer of his steamer. Mr. Allan naturally said, "What young man?" Mr. Allan explained at once that he had given it to me only as a reference for passing the board of examiners.

That afternoon the Captain sent for me and told me



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quite emphatically that Mr. Allan had given me that reference for another reason. I admitted that his assertion was true, but quietly asked him if I had told him or Captain Wylie otherwise. He backed down, and admitted that it was quite true. The Captain was a thorough autocrat, and rather a good-looking fellow, about forty-five years of age, and had a very full, black beard and mustache. We never agreed, as I was rather independent, and thought I could do my duty, and would not stand any gruff talk.

The *Ottawa* was built for a mate to the Confederate privateer *Alabama*, but, a protest having been made by the Northern States, she was never allowed to leave Birkenhead. The Allan Line bought her, but did not use all her furnaces, as the coal consumption was enormous when she was driven at her designated speed of sixteen knots. She could carry nearly one thousand passengers in all three classes, but she was not a profitable cargo boat, as she was built of iron, and her plates were one and a quarter inches, so that she was already half loaded with the iron construction as ballast.

She was barque rigged, and the sails were used whenever possible. Everybody along the water front wondered how I had been able to get the fourth officer's berth on the *Ottawa* when so many better men were after the position. They agreed that I must have had a pull somewhere. All my folks thought I was wonderful, with the gold lace and brass buttons; and my young boy friends thought I was doing fine. Silence proved to be golden.

Aggie and I spent every minute together when she could make excuses for being out of her home. Those were happy days, and I can never forget them. Agnes

### *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

seemed entirely different from other girls, and, though very warm hearted and loving, she had inherited from her parents and grandparents a love for God and righteousness which was wonderful.

It was natural for her to be good, and what a benediction she was to me.

We left Glasgow on April twelfth for Montreal, and had to work our way slowly through the ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. After landing our passengers at Quebec we proceeded to Montreal and discharged our cargo, and loaded again for Glasgow.

On our second trip to Montreal in the *Ottawa* we took on a crowd of passengers, and I enjoyed the life and gaiety, the concerts and dances.

Every second day it was my turn to be on the bridge at six P.M., and I was relieved when dinner was over, to eat my meal in the dining room alone. A very fine girl who was going to Toronto with her family always sat opposite and kept me company.

Even the Captain took notice of how faithful she was in sitting near me, and asked her one day what the reason was that she never kept the third officer company when he ate alone?

We used to walk the deck together at night, when I was off duty, and became so friendly that she would even kiss me goodnight.

There is something about the sea which has an influence on girls in passenger ships, and will lead them to indiscretions of which they would never think when ashore. It may be the leisure, with nothing particular to do, that unhinges them, but the fact remains that they need guarding.



## *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

This girl's name was Jean, and a very nice, sensible girl she was, yet she took a fancy to me, and imagined herself to be in love with me, knowing that in a few days we would part, and might never meet again.

It made things very pleasant for me on the passage; but I had a girl of my own, whom I loved with a love that was of a steadfast quality. But, I was very young, and fond of fun, and did enjoy Jean's company.

On our return trip to Glasgow our Captain decided to take the short northern passage to Glasgow, going through the Straits of Belle Isle, that is, between Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was the ninth of June, and the field ice was very thick, and, half way through the Straits, it packed together so solidly that we could make no headway.

We were afraid of breaking our propeller blades, and seeing no clear water from our masthead, the Captain had to turn back and go out by Cape Ray. I can imagine what conditions were encountered by the flyers on the *Bremen* when they landed in the Straits, while trying to fly to New York, in the month of April. Some cold place to live all the year round, but I imagine lovely in July and August.

One of my sisters was getting married on June twenty-first, and that date was chosen on account of the fact that I was due in Glasgow on the morning of June twentieth.

I arrived home at six P.M., and the wedding was at seven, so I had just time to dress, and give the bride away. Scotch wedding festivities are gay, and Agnes was there as a guest, so life was very pleasant for me at this stage of my career.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

There was a monotony to the easy life on the *Ottawa*, but I did not know just what next to attempt. I had heard all about the Great Lakes, and the opportunities to be found by a young man in America, and had heard from a boyhood chum who had gone to Kansas with his father and mother, and settling there, had written glowing descriptions about the western world.

I finally decided to make one more trip in the *Ottawa*, and then go out to America. I wanted to see more of the world, and seek adventure in some other field.

On my third voyage in the *Ottawa* we were again full of passengers, and in the cabin were Mr. and Mrs. Gray, and their daughter Nellie. They were Scotch farmers, and were bound for Toronto to meet a son who had gone ahead a year before and bought land. Nellie took the place of Jean on the previous trip, and I have very pleasant memories of these nice girls. Jean was a decided brunette, while Nellie was very fair, with a clear skin and rosy cheeks. She just loved to sing and dance and have a good time, so that satisfied me. Nellie was also very confiding, and loving, and her father and mother, knowing of her tendencies, kept an eye on her all the time when they found that she was fond of the young, boyish fourth officer's company.

We had pleasant weather; and I often thought about the difference in my life now, and the time when I clung to a topsail yard, trying to reef a frozen sail on the sailing ships.

Upon my return to Glasgow I informed the Superintendent of my decision, but would remain on duty until another officer took my place, and attend to the discharging of the cargo.



### *From Foc'sle to Cabin*

My sweetheart had gone on her holidays to the Island of Arran, but had left instructions how to find her.

I spent five delightful days with Aggie and a friend, whose name was Aggie Purdy. She was very considerate, and arranged so that my sweetheart and I could go off alone, as she knew that I was going away to what seemed, to her, far-off America.

I journeyed to Glasgow ahead of them, to arrange for my passage, as I thought it would be a novelty to go as a passenger.

I was certainly young and foolish, and ought to have had someone who could advise me wisely. For economical reasons I booked in the second class cabin on the S.S. *St. David*, for Montreal, as I was ashamed to go steerage, after being an officer on the line.

My heart beat fast one day when I met my intended father-in-law on top of a bus. After a casual greeting he said, "I understand that you and Agnes are keeping company." I admitted that such was the case, and that I was to be her future husband. He smiled ironically, and said that Mrs. Wellwood and he wished it otherwise; but as I got off the bus I shook hands with him very heartily, and expressed a hope they would change their minds, because I truly loved their daughter.

He wished me well, and that I might make a success in America.

I parted from my kinfolk and sweetheart, not having any idea when I would see them again, or knowing where I was going when I landed in Montreal.

I gave all the money I had saved to my Mother, except fifteen dollars, as I intended to work my way west if I decided to go to Kansas, and the fifteen dollars, I figured,

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would take me to a port of Lake Ontario if I wanted a ship.

Agnes and I parted, promising each other that, no matter what happened, we would stick together.

In a way, she became an outcast in her home, and I often wondered why she did not give me up, and marry one of the young, steady chaps belonging to the church which we attended.

I begged a boy chum to look after her while I was away, which he did, with a vengeance, by falling in love with her. I found this out many years afterward.

My trip was very pleasant on the *St. David*, and Captain Scott and the officers were very kind to me. The Captain was a member of a large family of Scotts belonging to Greenock, and I knew at least two generations of them who followed the sea. The Captain was about sixty years of age, and was well known at that time as "Daddy Scott." He was a good daddy to me, and, when he found that there was a vacant stateroom in the first cabin, he moved me into it. While he thought I was doing a strange thing, leaving the *Ottawa* and going I knew not where, I could see that he rather admired me for the venture.

"Daddy" did not like the way one of the saloon passengers was acting toward some of the girls on board, and wanted me to keep an eye on him, and see that all things were done in a decent, orderly way. He thought I was very staid and dependable for my years, and could be trusted to look after the girls. This impression of me the first day or two was complimentary. I felt the parting with my girl, and was not sure that going to America was wise, and I did feel solemn, and somewhat depressed.



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I soon got over these feelings, however, and entered into the games and sports of the young folks. We had some very nice Irish girls in the steerage, and we had a good time together, in a wholesome, innocent way. The Irish girls, I have found in my travels, who are fresh from Ireland and home influence, are discreet.

I met a lady on the boat who had been a passenger on the *Ottawa*. She was a farmer's wife, and lived about thirty miles from Montreal. I had been kind to her when she was weak and seasick, and although she was a first cabin passenger, the other passengers did not seem at all friendly to her, because they could see that she was only a farmer's wife. She was glad to see me on the *St. David*, and thought that I was an officer. When we got to Montreal she insisted that I go home with her for a few days, as she wanted her husband and family to meet the young fourth officer who had been so kind to her when she was lonely and sick on the *Ottawa*. "Cast your bread upon the waters, and it shall return to you many days hence. . . ." What little I did for the lady returned to me in good measure, I might say "pressed down and running over," for they just loaded me down with kindness. They were prosperous farmers and drove me in their carriage all over the surrounding country, and the good husband took a holiday for the three days I was with them, and tried to influence me to settle down right there. Why go further?

I expected a letter from my friend in Kansas when I arrived in Montreal, but, not receiving any, I decided to go on the Lakes, and try fresh water sailing.

The farmer came into Montreal to see me safely on a steamer that went to Toronto, and, after we left the

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wharf I put my hand in my jacket pocket and found a ten dollar bill which he must have slipped in. That good farmer thought a lot of his wife, and he wanted her to enjoy the money she helped him make. He proved this by sending her to Scotland to see if her native air would do her health good.

The steamer which I took passage on was quite large, and, after we passed through the locks at Lachine, I took a walk and found her saloon and dining room were well equipped, and very handsomely decorated. I also observed an officer of the steamer, who proved to be the chief mate, and three men looking at a large, new hawser, and deliberating and talking over how they were going to put an eye into it.

I was well dressed, and did not look like a sailor, so the officer looked surprised when I said, "Let me do that for you."

He said, "Can you do it?"

I replied that I was a deep water sailor, and the mate then gave his approval, and sent two of the deck hands to help me. I asked him to take them away, as they would not be of much assistance to me.

Just as I finished the job the Captain and a saloon passenger walked past, and I heard the gentleman ask the Captain if that was one of his sailors.

The Captain said, "No, but he is a sailor, all right, or he could not do that job." He called to me, as I started to walk away, and asked me where I was going, and I told him that I did not know, but was aiming to sail on the Lakes.

He probably thought the chief mate was allowing me to work my way, so asked me if I had paid my fare. I



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said, "Yes," and told him how many dollars I had paid.

"Well," he said, "I will get it back from the purser, and return it to you; and, while you are welcome to go as far as the vessel goes, I would advise you to get off at Kingston, as there is more shipping there than at Toronto."

I thanked him very heartily, and told him I would take his advice. He asked me what town in Scotland I hailed from, and said that he had come from Aberdeen, thirty years ago. His name was Scott, and he looked a typical old Scotchman, with his long, grey beard.

I had a good room to sleep in that night, and wrote a long letter to Aggie and my Mother, how well I was being cared for, and that the good hand of God was upon me. My Mother was a woman of prayer, and I could feel that they were asking God to guide me aright.

## CHAPTER X

### *Sailing on the Great Lakes*

THE steamer arrived in Kingston about five P.M., and I found a few Lake sailors around, and asked them about conditions, and what wages were being paid. There was quite a variety of schooners in the harbor, but I did not ask if they were shipping men until I spied the largest vessel. She had three masts, and was square rigged on the foremast, which means that she had a square foresail yard, topsail yard, top-gallant yard, and even carried a royal yard.

I found the Captain, and asked the usual question, "Do you require any hands?" He told me he did not, but asked where I came from.

The previous evening a Frenchman had been promised the job, and, while I was talking to the Captain, he hove in sight.

I could see that the Captain preferred me, and, turning around, he had a few words with his son, who was mate, and told me to get my clothes at once, as the *Cavilier* was sailing in about an hour.

I settled with my boarding master, and joined my new ship, bound to Toledo, Ohio, to load grain.

We went to Port Dalhousie, the entrance to the Welland Canal, on Lake Ontario.

Someone among the sailors allowed that wages were going up, and suggested that we brace the Captain for a quarter more a day. We did so, but he refused, until



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we threatened to quit. That made the wages a dollar and a half per day.

A team of horses dragged us on the levels through the canal, and we hove her in and out of the twenty-nine locks, slowly but steadily, for two days and nights. My job was to walk along the bank, with a heaving line, and if the ship pointed her nose for the bank I hauled a rope ashore and put it on a post, and the crew took a turn on the stern bitts aboard, and snubbed her until the ship went straight along the canal again.

I thought this was certainly a new experience, and so different from racing in the clipper ships.

Sometimes the *Cavilier* refused to be snubbed straight, and would poke her nose into the mud, and stay there. The men on board then got a line to the opposite bank, and hove her off, or waited for a small steamer to come through, and would either beg or pay her to pull the ship off. We finally got to Port Colborne, and out onto Lake Erie, and slowly made our way toward Toledo, at the head of the Lake.

Another young salt water sailor, Jim Fraser, from St. John, New Brunswick, and I managed to get put together in the mate's watch, and we stuck together until the sailing season ended December first.

It did not take us long to find out that the Captain knew very little about handling the *Cavilier*, with her square rig forward, as he had made a botch several times of tacking ship. His son was about twenty years of age, rather stupid, and had no training in sailing a vessel. The Captain had been a ship carpenter, and had superintended the building of the *Cavilier* for the owners. They must

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have concluded that a man who could superintend the building of a ship should be able to sail her.

We made Toledo Harbor all right, but next day were ordered to Milwaukee, on Lake Michigan.

Captain Jamieson had been to Saginaw, on Lake Huron, but had never been on Lake Michigan. It was some adventure for him to take a vessel to Milwaukee. He discovered that I was a navigator, and produced some charts for me to show the mate how to find his position by dead reckoning. They were all right if land could be seen, but I realized that in foggy or hazy weather they would get lost. The *Cavilier* did not carry a second mate, so that the Captain kept one watch, and the mate the other.

The Captain was sick for two days while on Lake Huron, and asked me to take his watch, and he would rate me as second mate, with an increase in pay of fifty cents per day. Money was what I wanted, so I took the job.

The ship was empty, but had a large centerboard, like all Lake boats. This enabled them to pass through shallow rivers and canals, by hoisting the centerboard. They did not have keels like salt water ships, and their bottoms were flat.

We got to Milwaukee, but did not enter the harbor. A tug came out and informed us that we were to load in Chicago. The Captain would not accept the order from the tug, and insisted on being taken ashore to see the agent.

It was quite hazy, and smoke was in the air from burning forests. No rain had fallen for over six weeks. The Captain told his son to keep well off the land if it grew foggy, and, if he did not return by six P.M. to proceed to



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Chicago, and he would go the ninety miles by rail, and would meet us at the entrance. He turned to me and said, "Tom and you can handle the ship all right. Be careful, and take no chances."

I thought to myself, "The owners who made you Captain are taking big chances, unless they carry heavy insurance."

I was enjoying the strange way that business was being done, and the slow manner in which we had come from Kingston. We were a month in getting to Milwaukee, but the weather had been fine, and the food good, so why complain?

Six o'clock came, and no Captain appeared; so we set our course for Chicago, and by ten o'clock next day we signalled to a tug which the Captain had sent out when he sighted us. He came on board at the first bridge through which we passed, docked at a large elevator on the south side of the dirty little creek they called a river. Of course this was long before they turned the river from running into the Lake, to the Lake through the river.

The elevator boss said that we must have the ship ready for grain to run next morning, which was Sunday, October eighth, 1871.

Tom, the mate, Jim Fraser, and I wanted some recreation after our long passage from Kingston.

Captain Jamieson gave me five dollars, for making such good time from Milwaukee to Chicago, but told me to keep straight, as he wanted me to tally the hoppers of grain, when weighed, and then run into the ship.

Freights had advanced very much since we left Toledo, and our charter to carry the grain to Kingston was twenty-one cents a bushel.

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I think the Captain had a share in the ship, which is probably why he handed me the five dollars.

We went ashore, and had several long schooners of lager, and ended up in the music hall and heard Tony Pastor, who was then in the prime of life, sing what was then a very popular song, "Down in a coal mine, underneath the ground." Everyone was crazy about Tony Pastor in 1871. His music hall in New York attracted me some years later. Well, he had his day, and, like many more of the old timers, passed out of the picture, poor, after having accumulated a fair sized fortune.

We returned to our ship, and, after a good sleep, started loading the wheat at seven A.M. on Sunday morning. There was very little respect for the Sabbath in Chicago, even in those days, and, from all accounts, the same lawless crowd that was there in 1871 has left many descendants to carry on the gambling houses, and the low resorts in the Red Light District.

Something went wrong with the machinery in the grain elevator, and it was eight P.M. Sunday night before we finished.

We glided down the creek next morning, and were kept busy drawing water to throw on burning shingles which fell on deck from a large elevator that was a mass of flames.

The tug which took us out on the Lake was in a great hurry, and let go our hawser about one hundred yards from the river entrance. As there was very little wind, we nearly drifted ashore. A light breeze came from the southwest, however, and we slowly drew away from the rocks.

Later on we could see quite a good sized fire which



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appeared to be quite a distance from the grain elevator. The wind freshened, and we sailed away from the dense masses of smoke which were coming from one of the greatest conflagrations in history.

Not only a large residential section of the city burned, but some of the largest hotels and theatres, and, worst of all, most of the large business houses in the wholesale district.

We lost sight of the burning city of Chicago, and did not know until we got to the Detroit River that the fire had done such fearful damage. O'Leary's cow was blamed for starting the fire, by kicking over the lamp, but there were embers enough flying around when we left to start a dozen fires. Everything was so dry all over the surrounding country that miles out on the Lake the smoke was stinging our eyes. I have sometimes thought that I did not see the real start of that great Chicago fire, as I read that another elevator caught fire after we left and was burning when the big fire started.

Captain Jamieson was very nervous, though he tried to conceal it. I fancied that he would rather be down on Lake Ontario, where he knew the landmarks, than up on unfamiliar Lake Michigan.

As we glided along down toward the foot of the Lake the wind freshened to half a gale, and the Captain thought it best to run into a bay, and anchor for the night. That was our second night away from Chicago.

I could not advise, and did not care to.

So, instead of running for the Straits of Mackinaw with the fair wind, the ship was hauled on the wind, and we went into this bay, or bight in the land.

Orders were given to clear the anchor, and have it

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ready to let go. The helm was put down, and the order was given to let go the anchor when the ship's way was stopped.

The chain ran out until forty fathoms had passed over the windlass, before the anchor reached bottom. The Captain was at least one and a half miles away from the proper anchorage ground, where there were only eight fathoms of water, and he had let go his anchor in thirty-five fathoms.

The next order was to heave up the anchor, which took over an hour. Then we set sail, and finally made the proper anchorage. The Captain made another mistake, and did not sail her close up under the land, where he would have been in a safe, sheltered place.

The anchor was again let go, and a man placed on anchor watch, who would report any change of wind or dragging of anchor. I took the first watch, and the sailors were supposed to take two hours each of this duty.

About midnight the sailor on watch reported that the ship's anchor was not holding, and that we were drifting fast into the middle of the bay.

It was true, and the *Cavilier* was rolling and pitching in a short, wicked sea.

I ran down to the cabin and told the situation to the officers, but neither of them would come on deck, nor suggest what was to be done. The Captain pleaded illness, and the mate must have been told by his father to stay in his bunk. I was mad enough to berate both father and son, but kept quiet.

I ordered all hands on deck, who growled about getting no rest, and cursed the Captain.

They worked while they growled, however, and Jim



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Fraser stuck to me as I ordered the second anchor cleared away. When she took a sheer to port I let the second anchor go, and paid out all the chain on both. By taking bearings, I was relieved to find that the anchors were holding. I sounded the pumps, and discovered that she was making water through rolling and straining in that turbulent sea. The man who was both cook and steward very willingly got out of his bed and made coffee; and after we got the water pumped out everyone enjoyed a meal of bread and meat at three A.M.

Why the Captain ever came into that bay, I never learned, especially was it a crazy thing to do when there was a fair wind to the end of Lake Michigan and through the Straits of Mackinaw blowing all the time.

I got only about an hour's rest that night; with the vessel pitching and tossing it was nearly impossible to sleep.

Captain Jamieson got up at five o'clock and wanted to call the crew to heave up the anchors.

I reminded him that they had been working most of the night, and said that it would be wise to let them sleep until six. He was in a very bad mood, and realized that he might have been half way down Lake Huron if he had kept on sailing. I was wise enough not to rub it in, but I did feel like calling him "an old woman," and several other names.

At six o'clock the crew came on deck, and we hove in the starboard anchor, which took four hours. The windlass was out of order, and we found a pile of iron filings under the windlass which we had ground off a defective part of the gear. The exertion and wasted strength we expended was terrible. Everybody wanted

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our anchors, and overhaul the wind-  
however, would not listen to any

We drifted over eight miles while  
anchor; and by supper time we had  
t out into the Lake, so that, after  
go through the Straits in the dark.  
it came on to blow a gale, with the  
re sea which gets strength and kick  
increases on the Lakes.

towed, leaving only the fore topsail  
creasing gale. Within a few hours  
s to lower the topsail down on the

about fifty years of age was at the  
had told him to put his helm hard  
her in the wind, and deadened her  
r lay like a log.

topsail threw her down, so that the  
atch was under water.

busy, trying to have the gear of the  
handling, when I suddenly realized  
of losing our lives.

aft, and found that the helm was  
captain looking to windward as if he  
hing.

w had climbed up the mizzen rig-  
their heads that they would live  
ger when the *Cavilier* sank. I told  
put his helm up, and try to get her  
at she would right herself. And  
n and cursed him in good, fluent



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English, and asked him if he was trying to drown us, to which he made no reply.

The topsail yard was braced sharp up against the lee backstays, and I realized that checking that yard in and getting the vessel before the gale was our only salvation, either that, or cutting away the mast.

Fraser and I, at the risk of being swept overboard, went to our necks in the water to clear away the lee braces, and check the yards in.

We coaxed and cursed the sailors, and when they realized that we were trying to save them, they came down from the mizzen rigging and pulled on the weather braces. The Captain and his son were terror stricken, and their faces were the color of ashes.

When the yard was trimmed in, the ship slowly gathered way, and righted herself so that the main hatch, as well as the lee rail, came out of the water, and the ship was safe.

The Captain stood bewildered, and never opened his mouth, and Fraser and I went to the wheel, and relieved the old man who had faithfully carried out my orders.

The wind was from the Michigan shore, and the Captain was afraid he would get blown to the Canadian side of the Lake, admitting that the only way he knew to keep her from doing this was to put his helm down, and, as he thought, hug the Michigan shore.

The Captain watched me, and noticed how I was steering, and at last exclaimed, "You are not going to try and cross Saginaw Bay today? She would not live in the sea that will be running there!"

I asked him to simply go below and get warm, and it would all depend on the weather as to what I would do.

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I felt that I had saved my own life, as well as all on board, and the responsibility belonged to me to see a finished job.

The topsail was new, and the gear good, having bent it the Sunday we were in Chicago. Fraser took the men forward, and managed to hoist it a little. Whenever a heavy sea came after us I kept the ship nearly before the wind, and then would put the helm down, and work her up, so as not to get away from a little shelter we were getting from the land.

I felt worried, but determined to consult my charts again, and found a point ahead jutting out from a small bay which had eight fathoms of water, and good holding ground.

The Captain came on deck again, and looked ahead, and again asked me, "For ——— sake, don't cross the Bay until the gale is over."

I did not say much, but told him I was doing my best, and that there was a point of land ahead which we could get around, and probably find a sheltered place to anchor.

The sea was not going down, and several times it broke aboard with vicious force. A vessel was sighted ahead, which we soon discovered to be a steamer, or "propeller," sitting very low in the water.

She was a wreck, and we saw the smokestack topple and fall.

She was on our lee bow, and I could not keep the *Cavilier* much away from our course, and be able to haul up again and get round the point where we could anchor. A heavy rain set in, and obscured our view.

The Captain tried to persuade me to keep up, and make for the anchorage, but I never answered until he began



## *Sailing on the Great Lakes*

to rave about losing the ship, and all hands. I told him I was going to pass the wreck as close as possible and try to save somebody aboard.

Just then the wreck disappeared, and we were less than one half mile away. I took the wheel, while Jim Fraser and the mate, with the elderly man, who had been a very good fair coasting sailor all his life, were stationed along our lee side with handy pieces of rope, waiting to throw to any struggling being.

I kept straight for the center of the floating débris, I luffed up until the weather clew of the topsail shook, which deadened her way, and we passed slowly through the wreckage; but we rescued only one man, who was clinging to a part of the wheelhouse.

Jim Fraser threw a small, two inch rope, right over the head of the man, who eagerly grabbed it, and they hauled him in just abreast of our mizzen rigging. He was nearly gone, and just good luck had saved him.

He was carried into the cabin; and our cook brought him coffee, and the Captain gave him a good drink of rye from his pet bottle.

Fraser had relieved me at the wheel, and I relieved the Captain of that bottle of rye, as I too was all in, and about ready to drop. I swallowed what would have made two good drinks, and then took the helm while Jim Fraser changed his breath. We gave the elderly sailor a drink, and one to another chap who had helped us, so there were only a few drinks left for His Majesty.

Luck came our way, for in less than half an hour the rain ceased, and the gale abated so that we could hoist the topsail, set the fore topmast staysail, and a reefed mainsail.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

to quit trying to get our anchors, and overhaul the windlass. The Captain, however, would not listen to any advice of that kind. We drifted over eight miles while heaving up the port anchor; and by supper time we had enough sail on to beat out into the Lake, so that, after all, the Captain had to go through the Straits in the dark.

The next morning it came on to blow a gale, with the usual short, destructive sea which gets strength and kick as soon as the wind increases on the Lakes.

All the sails were stowed, leaving only the fore topsail to battle with the increasing gale. Within a few hours the Captain ordered us to lower the topsail down on the cap.

A decent old chap about fifty years of age was at the helm, and the Captain had told him to put his helm hard down, which jammed her in the wind, and deadened her way, and this made her lay like a log.

The pressure of the topsail threw her down, so that the lee side of her main hatch was under water.

Fraser and I were busy, trying to have the gear of the fore topsail clear for handling, when I suddenly realized that we were in danger of losing our lives.

I struggled to get aft, and found that the helm was hard down, and the Captain looking to windward as if he was discovering something.

The rest of the crew had climbed up the mizzen rigging, with the idea in their heads that they would live for a few seconds longer when the *Cavilier* sank. I told the man at the wheel to put his helm up, and try to get her before the gale, so that she would right herself. And I turned to the Captain and cursed him in good, fluent



## *Sailing on the Great Lakes*

English, and asked him if he was trying to drown us, to which he made no reply.

The topsail yard was braced sharp up against the lee backstays, and I realized that checking that yard in and getting the vessel before the gale was our only salvation, either that, or cutting away the mast.

Fraser and I, at the risk of being swept overboard, went to our necks in the water to clear away the lee braces, and check the yards in.

We coaxed and cursed the sailors, and when they realized that we were trying to save them, they came down from the mizzen rigging and pulled on the weather braces. The Captain and his son were terror stricken, and their faces were the color of ashes.

When the yard was trimmed in, the ship slowly gathered way, and righted herself so that the main hatch, as well as the lee rail, came out of the water, and the ship was safe.

The Captain stood bewildered, and never opened his mouth, and Fraser and I went to the wheel, and relieved the old man who had faithfully carried out my orders.

The wind was from the Michigan shore, and the Captain was afraid he would get blown to the Canadian side of the Lake, admitting that the only way he knew to keep her from doing this was to put his helm down, and, as he thought, hug the Michigan shore.

The Captain watched me, and noticed how I was steering, and at last exclaimed, "You are not going to try and cross Saginaw Bay today? She would not live in the sea that will be running there!"

I asked him to simply go below and get warm, and it would all depend on the weather as to what I would do.

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

I felt that I had saved my own life, as well as all on board, and the responsibility belonged to me to see a finished job.

The topsail was new, and the gear good, having bent it the Sunday we were in Chicago. Fraser took the men forward, and managed to hoist it a little. Whenever a heavy sea came after us I kept the ship nearly before the wind, and then would put the helm down, and work her up, so as not to get away from a little shelter we were getting from the land.

I felt worried, but determined to consult my charts again, and found a point ahead jutting out from a small bay which had eight fathoms of water, and good holding ground.

The Captain came on deck again, and looked ahead, and again asked me, "For ——— sake, don't cross the Bay until the gale is over."

I did not say much, but told him I was doing my best, and that there was a point of land ahead which we could get around, and probably find a sheltered place to anchor.

The sea was not going down, and several times it broke aboard with vicious force. A vessel was sighted ahead, which we soon discovered to be a steamer, or "propeller," sitting very low in the water.

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## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

The man we had saved proved to be the first engineer, and told us that they had left Port Huron early in the morning of the previous day, when the gale came on.

Many ships had turned back, during this gale, and reached Port Huron, but this Captain had kept on too long, and when he tried to turn back, shipped a sea that wrecked the bridge, and took half the wheelhouse overboard, along with the helmsman. Another sea swept over her, demolishing the bulwarks, and starting the covering board, so that the water just poured into her, and put out the furnaces. She was helpless, and finally sank, taking with her thirty-five passengers, and twenty-three of her crew. She was built of wood, and was bound from Buffalo to Chicago.

We got into Port Huron the next morning, and reported the wreck.

The survivor was sent to the hospital, suffering from immersion and shock.

Our Captain was interviewed by reporters, and insurance men, who took his account of what he had seen, as the only survivor was a very sick man, and might die.

The Captain was a surprise to me. I thought he would never get over his fright when we were on our beam ends, and did not know how to right her.

He had just a slight swaggering air about him that nearly got my nanny. I think I was a bit wiser in those days than when I grew older, or I would have "called" the Captain, and claimed some credit for saving the ship, and the survivor of the wreck.

I knew that Jim Fraser deserved great credit, and I would have enjoyed seeing him get some reward. I could not resist throwing a scare into Jamieson, so I took him



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to one side and just quietly told him that if I had been no better a sailor than his son and himself, we would all be at the bottom of Lake Huron.

"That will be all right," he said, "I intend to give you something when we get to Kingston."

The *Cavilier* had quite a list to port, and no wonder, for we found upon our arrival in Kingston that a solid mass of a thousand bushels of wet grain was under the port side of our main hatch. A batten had come off, which secured the tarpaulins that covered our main hatch, and while the Captain had the *Cavilier* jammed in the wind, and the lee side of the main hatch was under water, the sea had been pouring into her, and unless she had been righted and got before the wind, we would have been eligible, in about five minutes, for a place in the record of missing men.

I was tired, and the strain which I had been under had given me a shake. I slept twelve hours that night, and the steward told me that the Captain had told him to see that I was not disturbed. I had left Glasgow with the love of adventure and a strong desire to see the world, and I felt satisfied that I had experienced a little taste of adventure and change, on my very first trip on the Great Lakes.

A tug took us clear through the St. Clair flats and the Detroit River. We stopped at Windsor for the tug to get wood, which was the only fuel they burned in 1871.

We got out on Lake Erie, and had fine weather to Port Colborne. A team of horses were hired, and we were towed through the canal, which was only nine feet deep. Some years afterward it was deepened to accommodate a vessel drawing sixteen and a half feet.

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Man has been able to make many improvements, but they still have to battle with the elements on old Lake Erie.

The *Cavilier* had fifteen hundred bushels taken out of her by the elevator at Port Colborne, which was sent down to Port Dalhousie, and from there we took it on again. This was done so that the ship would draw only nine feet. Old-fashioned days, and old-fashioned ways of doing business—but it was the same everywhere, in the way of transportation, even in the large cities. The large freight the ship earned increased the sailors' wages, giving them two dollars and seventy-five cents. I was getting fifty cents more than that, and did not care if it took a month to sail the *Cavilier* to Kingston.

Whenever our vessel got stuck in the canal bank, sometimes fast into the mud for several hours, the Captain always blamed it on his son, the mate, who was supposed to con, or direct the steering. The real trouble was that it was impossible to steer her, because she was scraping the bottom. Jamieson used to curse his son at these times, and tell him to go ashore and go home.

I used to feel sorry for Tom. He was only a boy, and had received no training to fit him for such a position.

Arriving at Port Dalhousie we took on the fifteen hundred bushels again, and started for Kingston. We were now over on the Canadian side, and were making good way toward our destination.

We were anxiously gazing to windward as if expecting a storm, when the Captain inquired what we thought of the weather. We both exclaimed that we were in for a dirty night, but that it might blow over. The Captain went aft, and, after a talk with his son, called me aft, and



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told me to get all hands on deck, as he was going to run back to Toronto.

We were eighteen days from Chicago, and the wind had been fair ever since we left that city, and he was going to run for Toronto to avoid a gale that never came, just because he saw two young villains like Fraser and myself looking wise and shaking our heads. We thought, "The more days, the more dollars."

This was my first time in Toronto, and it impressed me as more like Glasgow than any place I have been. The ways of the residents, and the stores and churches, put me much in mind of my native town. We stayed two days in Toronto, and spent money on tugs, which must have amounted to at least one hundred dollars.

When the main hatch was taken off and the damaged grain found, a survey was held to find the cause. Owners of the grain wanted to blame the ship, and collect the price of the damaged grain out of the freight money. The Captain blamed it on the heavy gales and stress of weather, and, to sustain his position, wanted to have a protest, signed by the crew, confirming his opinion, and affirming good management on the part of Captain and officers. Jamieson came to me with tears in his eyes, and explained the situation.

He was paying off the crew, retaining his son, Jim Fraser, and myself. Twenty-five dollars was handed to me, and I was to be very friendly with the crew, and ask them ashore to have a parting drink, at which time the signing of the protest was to be presented. It was to be my job to bring the crew back to the ship, and the Captain would then call them aft to sign the protest, and then pay their wages. He promised me twenty-five dollars more,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

when this was done, and asked me to set the example and sign first.

Everything went the Captain's way, and his freight was paid in full.

It was the twenty-fifth of November when we took the *Cavilier* to Port Hope, her berth place, and laid her to rest for the winter. I was invited to the Jamieson home for dinner, where I met his wife and two daughters.

My adventures for the season of 1871 were not over, however, for one day at my lodgings the mate of a small schooner I had met in the Welland Canal came in and asked me to go with him to Oswego with a load of barley, which they were very anxious to deliver. The vessel was getting a very high freight, and the mate said I would get five dollars a day for my services. It was a great temptation, even though the weather was bad, and blinding snow-storms were to be expected, and it was rather risky in the small, one hundred ton schooner.

However, a fair wind was blowing, and the mate argued with me until I consented to go, he promising we would be in Oswego the next morning.

All went well until about eight P.M., when the wind came right ahead. We tacked ship. I was at the jib sheet, hauling it over, when the small, overloaded vessel took a dive, and a deluge of water immersed me. In a few minutes I was encased in ice.

The Captain was not only the owner, but a good sailor, and did not risk his vessel, but put her before the wind, and groped his way very skillfully into the Bay of Quinto. We anchored, and lay there thirty hours, until the wind became fair, and then we ran over to Oswego. We unloaded, and then hauled the vessel to a place near the



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entrance of the harbor, so that we could slip out when the fair wind returned.

The Captain did not want to leave his vessel, which needed repairs, in the port of Oswego, so we lay there three days before the wind shifted to a favorable quarter, and then steered for Port Hope. About midnight the wind hauled ahead, and blew heavily; and a blinding blizzard was on us.

The Captain had ordered close reefs in mainsail and foresail at the first signs of a change of wind, and the vessel was light, and made very good weather. The mate, a young chap about twenty, and another sailor who did the cooking, were the crew. The uppermost question in our minds was how long the blizzard would last. We had enough wood on hand to keep the stove going, but a rather small quantity of food, which the Captain thought we had better use sparingly, as we might be a week beating about in the snowstorm.

It was just ten degrees below zero, not intensely cold, now, or we would have been soon encased in ice. The spray froze the foresail, though, and the running gear on the foremast, while the two anchors were just a mass of ice, and were useless, should occasion arise for us to need them. If we stole into Port Hope could we get into the harbor, with ice already forming? That was the next problem.

It snowed continuously for two days, and we kept warm by shoveling snow, and beating the ice off the gear. At last the wind changed, and the sun came out to cheer us, and we managed to get the reefs out of the mainsail, and set the jib, but could not do anything with the foresail.

We made land all right, and the Captain was very little

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out in his reckoning, soon making out the entrance to Port Hope. As we had expected, ice had formed, but we kept all the sail on and ran in so that we could unbend the sails, and spread them to dry. A thaw usually came by the end of December, so the vessel still had a chance of being able to make her winter berth.

I was safely back, and had made forty dollars.<sup>92</sup> That was a lot of money for a sailor to make in eight days in 1871. The second officer of a large steamer on salt water would receive only that much in a month, and also had his uniform to buy.

Fraser, my old pal, had left to visit his New Brunswick home, and I felt lonely and cold, even though I was my own boss and had made two hundred dollars, which looked mighty big to me.

The next morning a horse and wagon took me across the ice of Belleville Bay, and I boarded a stage coach to Picton, to visit a distant relative. The snow was level with the fences, and it was bitter cold. There were all sorts of wraps in the coach, and straw on the floor, but we needed to stop at every inn and warm up with something hot to drink.

The rate at the best hotel was one dollar a day, or three dollars a week, so I engaged a comfortable room for a week, and enjoyed good board, including many meals of chicken and turkey. Those were the good old days of plenty for little!

America offered me comforts, and I decided to stay in America for the winter, and sail under the United States flag the following summer. I was sure that all vessels were not sailed or managed like the *Cavilier*.

So, I accepted an invitation to spend the winter in



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Michigan with relatives by the name of Thorburn. I located my lost relatives, who gave me a hearty welcome because I was the first one of their kinfolk they had seen for twenty-one years. My host, John Thorburn, owned a profitable farm of six hundred acres.

My lines had fallen in pleasant places, and the change from sea life was great.

John had prize bulls, and cows, and a pair of splendid gray horses for driving. He was a blacksmith, and came from Scotland to Lansing and worked at his trade. His father and mother had come over from Scotland, and he put them on a forty-acre plot, and then bought land around it until he acquired six hundred acres. With real pioneer spirit he had helped all the others to get away from Scotland to that land of opportunity.

It seemed difficult for him to become accustomed to having wealth, and using it, and he continued in his old, thrifty ways. I was the only one at their table who used sugar in tea or coffee. They did not use it, because they could not raise it in Michigan.

John held mortgages on a great many properties of the farmers in the locality who were not thrifty, but had pianos, and wanted to live like the people in the towns. John said to me one day, "Robert, you will get tired doing nothing all winter. I will pay you twenty dollars a month to help with the chores, such as feeding the cattle."

That just suited me. I told him about the two hundred dollars I had saved, and he said that seven per cent was the legal rate of interest, and he would pay me that for the use of my money, the same as he asked on any money he loaned.

The "sailor boy" was in great demand at all the dances,

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as I had a concertina, the only musical instrument around. (The Scotch farmers did not buy pianos.) My concertina allowed the folks to dance to the music of a singing tune that ran like this:

*Michigan girls, on you I call,  
The invitation is to all.  
The way is broad, the road is clear;  
Michigan girls, come volunteer, volunteer;  
Michigan girls, come volunteer.*

It had a catchy air, and old and young would join in a kind of country dance. Often we would not break up until five A.M., nearly time to do the chores.

There were several very pretty, wholesome girls always at the surprise parties, and two team loads of joyful people going to surprise some couple, carrying refreshments with them, such as pies, cakes, and doughnuts, was the sporty thing to do in those days. Kissing games and dancing were the principal attractions.

The ride in the wagons, all the young folks bundled up together in one wagon, with straw and rugs to keep us warm, made going and returning from one of these surprise parties, the principal feature of the occasion.

There was a maid in the Thorburn home, a farmer's daughter, who, like many other girls around, would rather live out, and earn money of her own. She was a good-looking girl, about eighteen years old, and did not allow anyone to make any approaches to love making.

As we became acquainted I would sit with her before the big, wood fire and chat, after the folks had gone to bed. I often told her about my Aggie, especially when



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my weekly letter came; but I began to see, however, that she was fast falling in love with me.

When I told her that I was leaving Delhi, and going back to the sea, she began to weep.

She said, "The day you leave, I shall leave too." Then she told me that she did not care to stay in the Thorburn family when I was gone.

I thought that she would go back to her own home, and never imagined that she had seriously fallen in love with yours truly. Elsie, and everyone else, thought that I would stay in Delhi. They wanted me to take up eighty acres of land and become a real farmer. I was undecided what to do. They even offered to give me a cow, another a pig, and John Thorburn wanted to give me a horse. They were all bent on making a farmer of the young sailor.

When the sun began to get high in the heavens in April I told all my friends, "One more summer on the Lakes, and I will come back to you, and be a farmer." I made the excuse that I wanted to have more money with which to start, and also to provide a suitable home for my bride.

I never returned to Delhi, but a few of the boys and girls remember my visit. They, like myself, are getting old.

My coming there was an event in their lives, and I am sure that it was an interesting visit for me. I learned how to handle an ax, for one thing, and that has proved useful.

I was never able to drive oxen with any satisfaction to myself, or anyone else, especially in the woods. I generally wrecked the sleigh on which we used to haul firewood. Those oxen seemed to know that I was a sailor, and paid

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no attention when I said, "Haw," or "Gee," often at the wrong time.

Elsie did not say outright that she wanted to go with me, but she did go from the Thorburn home. I had a letter from John two days after my arrival in Detroit, upbraiding me for taking the girl with me. He said that she took a train from an adjoining town, for Detroit. I wrote back at once and assured him that I had never seen her, and that if I did I would persuade her to go back home at once.

I told him that there had never been any thought of evil in my mind, and that I had a respect for Elsie and myself that would not permit me to injure her, as I thought her to be a very fine type of girl.

John answered at once, and apologized for accusing me of taking Elsie away, and asked me to scour Detroit, and find her if possible.

She did not return to Delhi in 1872, and I never knew what became of her.

I had been in Detroit two days when I saw two men going on board a schooner named the *Trinidad*. I went on board, and found them to be Captain and mate, and inquired if they wanted any help in fitting the schooner for service. The Captain asked a few questions, and when he found that I had been second mate of the *Cavilier* he hired me for three dollars per day, boarding myself until a cook joined the vessel.

The *Trinidad* belonged in Oswego, and usually ran between Chicago and that port. Patrick Finn was the Captain and sole owner of the schooner. He was a little Irish gentleman, very short in stature, but well built, and full of energy. When he realized that I was a real sailor,



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and knew just how to reeve the throat and peak halliards correctly, and without any effort, I was a hunky boy with him.

Madden, the mate, was not much of a sailor, but had a way with men. He threatened, if they did not toe the mark, without putting his threat into words. He was vain, and had a dyed, coal black mustache. He was about my own height, five feet nine, but heavily built, and a man that sailors had to obey.

The ice was not out of Lake St. Clair, so there was no hurry in fitting the *Trinidad* for sailing. I wrote to Jim Fraser the day I went to work on the *Trinidad*, and assured him of a berth on her, and more money than he could get on Canadian vessels. Telling Mr. Madden what a live wire he was in an emergency, he was anxious that I bring him along.

Nothing was said for a few days about who was going as second mate, and I was very anxious to get that job. Captain Finn hung around the schooner, and I worked like a horse, with the second mate's berth my goal.

I had only one man to help me in dragging the heavy sails around, and I did all the climbing in reeving the gaff topsail halliards, and was dead tired when night came.

The day Jim Fraser arrived in Detroit the Captain asked me how I would like to be second mate of the *Trinidad*. You can imagine my answer!

Madden was pleased, I think, as he realized that a young chap like me, who seemed to love work, would make it easy for him, for he did not like physical exertion.

Captain Finn put Fraser to work at once, so I had no trouble in finishing the fitting out of the schooner, with his very efficient help.

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The two hundred dollars I had saved on the *Cavilier*, and the money John Thorburn had paid me for doing chores, I left with him at seven per cent interest. I wrote Aggie that I wanted her to marry me early in the fall, when the Lake business closed. She was thrilled with the idea, as conditions in her home had not improved.

One of her brothers, who was studying for the ministry at Glasgow University, was the only one who sympathized with her in her love affair with "reckless" Bob Ramsay.

I told Agnes about the folks who wanted me to become a farmer, and it greatly appealed to her, because I would then be always with her. I felt worthy of her trust, and she told me to go ahead, and to do the best I could, and that when I wanted her she would be ready to leave home and kindred, and come to the little nest that I was trying to build for her.

What a joy her letters were, all through that summer on the *Trinidad*!

I have no language, nor ability to express how I was obsessed with the thought that in seven months my dreams of having Aggie all my own were to come true.

The thought of marriage, and all it meant, the responsibility of caring for my wife, kept me busy planning the best thing to do. Farming did not appeal to me, only as it would keep me at home.

So far, I was doing well on the Lakes, and young folks like me had something else to do beside worry. I had good news to send home about my life and prospects on the Lakes, particularly how well I was pleasing my new Captain.

Salt water was crying out for me to come back, however, and the finely equipped *Gleniffer* was entirely dif-



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ferent from the *Trinidad*. Being towed through the Welland Canal, by a team of old plug horses, was tame sport compared to racing in past Sandy Hook with the *Flying Cloud*, when her main top-gallant mast carried away. It was bred in me to take chances, and go after adventures, and make things happen, just for the love of excitement.

If I went back to salt water it would be a few years more before I could send for my sweetheart, because I would have to serve as second mate before I earned a mate's ticket, and then the search for a position on a reliable ship, before I could possibly marry.

Putting it into plain English, I wanted my girl, and I'll admit the lines of least resistance were urging me on to the road to possess her.

With good luck I might have twelve hundred dollars by December first. That was a lot of money for a young boy who would lack three months of being twenty-two; and marriage seemed to me the most glorious and enjoyable way to squander it.

We went from Detroit to Chicago, where I found a new city rising out of the ashes. A very large hotel was mounting into the air on a site where a new hotel had stood when I was there the day before the fire. Everywhere I looked a spirit of optimism was evident; and confidence in Chicago's future made it easy to finance the rebuilding of the city.

Shipping was not flourishing in Chicago, but sailors were getting good pay as laborers in the bricklaying and plastering line.

We loaded corn for the starch mills in Oswego, and had a fair passage down.

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Finns took a pride in keeping the *Trinidad* in good order, and I kept busy painting, and often worked during my afternoon watch below, and make an impression toward first mate's

Finns invited me to his home. He had a lovely family of several young children. I hope they may read this and have to say about the home life of their father and mother. Mr. and Mrs. Finn were a devoted couple, and expressed their affection in kindly consideration for each other. Thoughtful deeds, in either social or domestic life, are what determine our true selves. I am sure I will think in this way, but often forget to put it into action.

Finns family were staunch Roman Catholics, and I was a Presbyterian, yet we seemed to be of the one faith. We expressed their creed in kindly deeds, and I shook hands with them on that.

I did not hide from Mrs. Finn that I had a sweetheart. When she noticed how anxious I was about those letters that came from Scotland, so the Finns took a lively interest in my love affair, and were anxious that all should go well, and that I should come to Oswego, and settle there.

I went on to Chicago again, and back down to Kingsport. We stayed nearly a week, waiting our turn to go on the elevator. Everybody, and especially Captain, chafed under the delay, as freights were rising, and I was anxious to get back to Chicago.

Life on all Lake vessels, when lying so long, was very dull. The sailors to eat and sleep on board, but they were idle for the idle days. The Captain told Jim



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Fraser, however, to go ashore and enjoy himself with the other men, and he would pay him during the detention. He knew that stormy weather would come in the fall, when good men counted, and was afraid that Jim might ship in another vessel.

We went up to Marquette, on Lake Superior, and I was delighted to have the opportunity of seeing that great body of water, and the locks, built for very large vessels. The water was so cool and deep that I found it very enjoyable, and a very desirable place to be in August. When the wind was light we often caught delicious fish, and our "chef," who knew how to cook them, served them in good shape.

I had a very nice room in the cabin, and it was the custom for the Captain to steer while we ate our meal, and then the Captain would enjoy his alone.

We were thirty-six hours loading iron ore for the town of Erie, on Lake Erie, which was the only port that Pennsylvania had on the Great Lakes, and which proved that freight was gradually being handled more efficiently. I realized that quite a bit of experience was acquired by going to different ports, and in my leisure time I studied navigation, and learned the location of lights all over the Lakes.

We took a load of anthracite coal to Chicago, and that brought some money into our good Captain's pocket. Two days were spent there, and, while unloading, Mr. Madden met with a serious accident while passing along the deck, when a swinging coal bucket hit him, and fractured his thigh. He was removed to the hospital, where he remained for two months.

Captain Finn promoted me to mate's place, and had

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Fraser act as second mate until we got to Oswego, and Captain Finn had time to see how Jim and I managed with the running of the ship. I lacked six months of being twenty-two years of age, and Jim was one year older.

We had no trouble in getting work done. I attended to the loading and trimming of the grain in Chicago, to the satisfaction of the Captain, and everything went very smoothly.

One day while looking at the draught of water I observed a man looking at me very intently. His face seemed familiar, but I could not place him until he walked up and said, "Mr. Ramsay, what are you doing here?"

I then recognized him as a Norwegian who had been on the *Gleniffer*. His name was John Frank, and he was a thoroughly good sailor, about thirty-six years of age. He had been on the Black Ball Line packet ships between New York and Liverpool, and had also been ten months on the Confederate privateer *Tallahassee*. I was glad to see him.

He wanted a ship, and we wanted a man to take Jim's place in the forecastle. He was a blessing to me for the remainder of that season.

We had rope shrouds for rigging on the *Trinidad*, and I told Captain Finn that, with his permission, I wanted to turn the lower main rigging in. That meant taking the seizings off, and turning in the rigging so as to make a fresh nip round the dead eye.

The Captain had never seen such a job done, only in a rigging loft. Without Frank I would not have tackled the job, as I had only assisted in doing such a job, and



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had never directed the operation before. As soon as we got out on the Lake we started the work, and, as we had very light winds, ran no risks of being caught. As a precaution, however, good tackles were put on the shrouds that were adrift before work was quit at night.

The Captain was as proud as I of the job, and when we were becalmed in the Straits of Mackinaw he had the boat put in the water and went aboard a very rakish looking barquentine named the *James R. Bentley*, and, after visiting with her Captain for an hour, brought him back to the *Trinidad* to show him what his young mate was doing.

The *Bentley* was one of the large Lake vessels, and one of the fastest, and easiest handled. Her square foresail brailed into the mast. She had double topsail yards. The upper topsail, when lowered, dropped into brails, and required no handling or reefing. Above the upper topsail were what were called raffies, which ran up on a stay each side of the topmast, and did not require furling.

She carried more than double the cargo of the *Cavilier*, and had only one man more in the crew. She was a money maker.

We were becalmed for a whole day, and I was taken on the *Bentley* by her Captain, while he proudly showed me how she was rigged. He also told me that if freights kept getting higher, as he expected they would, his vessel would clear that season every penny it had cost to build her.

We finished the rigging job before we made Lake Erie, and cleared a ten-day passage to Port Dalhousie, and were two days from there to Oswego. Mrs. Finn made

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me very welcome, and congratulated me on my promotion, and also told me that the promotion was permanent, as the Captain was pleased with my work.

I had made a success on the Lakes so far, and had become very economical. Occasionally a few glasses of lager was all I bought, so my savings kept growing. I put every penny I could spare into a bank in Oswego, and Captain Finn did his part to help me save money.

I was getting four dollars a day, one dollar more than the sailors. On the next trip the sailors' wages were three dollars and fifty cents, and finally, when freights went as high as twenty-one cents to Buffalo, and twenty-six to Lake Ontario, I was receiving five dollars per day, and found, the year 1872 was a great time for shipping on the Lakes, and I was a lucky boy.

As I dreamed of the little Scotch lassie with the serious eyes and the pretty auburn hair, it looked as if my dreams of having Aggie for my very own would surely come true.

We went directly to Chicago, for grain, and, "drive her," was the word. There was no work, unless it was to sweep and wash the decks down, attend to the sailing, and watch the steering. Such a chance for making money had never occurred before in all Lake history, and this situation would put Captain Finn on Easy Street, with his other vessel, the *James R. Noyes*, making as much money as the *Trinidad*.

I cannot tell why God was so good to me. He gave me health and strength, but, above all else, a living faith in Him. He freely gave the faith, and it was my job to exercise it, for His honor.

God was using the little Scotch girl to hang on to me,



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keeping me from many temptations, as I was getting to be a bit too fond of my liquor.

We went from Chicago back to Oswego, which made a pleasant break in my life, as I was often invited to the Finn home. They had a nice, old-fashioned garden, and I thought it a great treat to be able to pull and eat the red, ripe tomatoes. We never grew them in Scotland, and the home-like scene, and that pleasant garden, is still fresh in my memory.

We were three days in Oswego, waiting our turn at the elevator, and our Captain was impatient to be away, as it meant loss of money to him. I was glad to see him making money, and worked hard to help him, for he was treating me like a brother.

Night and day I pushed the *Trinidad*, and never got stuck in the mud. Fat never got a chance to accumulate on my bones, but muscle and sinew did, and I weighed one hundred and sixty-five pounds, which I required to do my work, which was very exacting.

A mate on a salt water ship gave orders, but a mate on a Lake boat like the *Trinidad* issued an order, and then put every ounce of his weight and strength into action to have his order executed.

In and out of the Welland Canal, those heavy sails had to be hoisted, and it was all bull strength which did it, as we had no modern appliances. It was the same going through the Detroit River; so men with weight, who knew how to use it, were in demand.

There was nothing soft or sloppy about life on the Lakes. It was hard work, but it fitted me for the strenuous days ahead.

Eight hours is now a longshoreman's day, and men

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will not work as they did forty or fifty years ago. Hard work never hurt me, but I must confess that men were treated more like beasts of burden than was quite fair to them.

On Lake Huron a handsome vessel overhauled and passed us, named the *Oneonta*. She had three masts, and was rigged on the foremast just like a square rigger on salt water, including a royal yard, and inner, outer, and flying jibs, beside her foretopmast staysail. She soon left us behind, but we loaded under the same elevator, and I went aboard and met the chief mate, whose name was Cameron. He told me that his Captain had bought the *Oneonta* for seventeen thousand dollars when vessel property was low in price, in the summer of 1871, and predicted that in 1872 he would be able to pay all running expenses as well as the initial cost of the ship.

This was the land of opportunity for that Captain, whose name was McMillan, and who had come from Scotland in 1866. The *Oneonta* went fifteen knots, and made the run from Chicago to Buffalo in four days, which was wonderful time, when the distance to be traversed is taken into consideration, and the slow tow down from Lake Huron to Lake Erie. She beat us thirty-six hours on a short run. The race between her and the *Trinidad* was not so close as the ninety-day contest between the tea clippers *Ariel* and *Tae ping*, from Foochow to London, in 1866, when the *Tae ping* beat her rival by only twenty minutes.

When I realized that my darling in Glasgow was planning to steal away without the consent of her parents, and might not have the necessities for a sea trip, I sent her a money order for one hundred dollars; and also sent an



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equal amount to my Mother, as a present. When the girl's parents discovered that I had sent this money, and would be sending her passage money in the near future, it set them to thinking that I must be making a success of myself in America.

A very nice letter came from my soon-to-be father-in-law, asking me to go to Glasgow and be married from their home, in the conventional way.

That was taking a lot of backwater, after all their opposition.

What could I do? The proposal completely upset my plans, and meant a loss of time and money. Captain Finn said that I could work on his three ships during the winter, making repairs which were necessary.

In my mail was a letter from Agnes. She did not urge me to do as her parents wished, but left the matter entirely to me. There was also a letter from my Mother, asking me to accede to the wishes of Aggie's parents, as she knew Agnes would be the one most pleased if consented to be married among her own people, so that she could go out from her girlhood home with the blessing and good wishes of her Father and Mother.

I told Captain and Mrs. Finn of my dilemma, and they agreed with Aggie's parents, and advised me to go for my bride, and bring her out in time to fit out the schooners.

I respected my sweetheart's Father, a man of sterling character, who had brought up a family of three sons and five daughters, and was the Elder for our district in the large Presbyterian Church which his family and my own attended. He was a man of weight in the community, and took an active part in civic affairs.

I had sense enough to know that it meant success in

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shelter of the land, and it did look silly to have put all those reefs in. Captain Finn did not speak, but paced the deck, and I could see that he would like at least one reef out of those sails. He was a wise little man, however, and kept still. In twenty minutes, as she slowly got away from the land, the wind kept increasing, and as we set her course for Port Colborne, we found the wind directly aft, and becoming stronger. We had to run down the Lake either wing and wing, that is, with the foresail on one side and the mainsail on the other, or have the wind on our quarter, and be steering two points from our course. Then we would have to put her on the opposite tack to make a true course, if we chose the latter method; and it would be no easy job to do this in the turbulent, wicked sea that gets up on Lake Erie, which is very shallow.

My advice was to keep her before the wind, and take the risk of losing our main boom and sail, and perhaps the mast. The wind blew with hurricane force, and the *Trinidad* flew through the water and veered from her course as the heavy sea rushed under her stern, and the main boom was immersed in the Lake.

John Frank was at the wheel, and was doing his best to keep her straight, and not jibe that long, main boom. If the wind would only haul even two points we could have kept up under the Canadian shore and made better weather of it. All hands had to stay aft, as she was taking very heavy seas in amidships. Captain Finn was afraid to try to jibe the foresail, as it was impossible to go near the foresheet, with such heavy seas breaking over her. We could only keep on, and pray that the wind and sea would abate.



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We left the Detroit River at four P.M., on November twenty-ninth, and at midnight our Captain asked me if I would take the wheel, as Jim Fraser was all in, and he could not trust the other man. I told him I was glad to do it, as the anxiety of watching a man steer who was not thoroughly competent was simply agony. The loss of a mast, or even the main boom, might mean the loss of the schooner and all hands. I never left the wheel until the old *Trinidad* was fast inside the pier head at Port Colborne at seven A.M. the next morning. It was a strain, but I have had to go through worse.

When we sighted land ahead we had to work fast, and get the mainsail in, lowering it down, and hauling the sheet in. A small hawser was rove through a hawse pipe, and made fast to the foreboom, to ease it over when the boom jibed.

With our usual good luck, the wind had abated somewhat, and without the loss of a rope yarn we lowered the foresail, about two hundred yards from the end of the pier, and glided in safely. Willing hands caught her heaving lines, and hauled good, stout hawsers ashore, and put them on posts. The first hawser parted, but checked her speed so that the second one held her.

The cook soon had a hearty breakfast ready for us, and, as we were all tired, Captain Finn advised us to get at least two hours' sleep. When is sleep appreciated more than after a hurricane?

We had been in very great danger, and thanked our stars in that we had close reefed our sails before leaving Detroit. Two large schooners, caught, I suppose, carrying too much sail, went ashore between Cleveland and

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Erie, partially dismasted. Only five of the nineteen men in the two crews were saved.

Ice had formed in the long, six-mile level, so Captain Finn and two more Captains who were anxious to get through, hired a tug to break through the ice. If our hawsers got into the water they immediately became as hard as iron, and it was a nasty job to handle them in the bitter cold.

We worked until nine P.M., and slid through two locks. We began towing again at daybreak next morning, and towed until ten at night, and reached a place called Thorold, about half way through the canal, and went to bed exhausted and half frozen.

The men were beginning to grumble at towing so late at night, and told the Captain that they would not work after dark the next night, unless they received double pay, which the Captain agreed to give them, as he was very anxious to get his vessel safely into Oswego.

Tired, and rather grouchy, I came on deck the next morning at six A.M. and was bewildered to find that we were frozen solid, and covered with eighteen inches of snow. No more towing at night, and handling frozen hawsers, seemed a relief. For my Captain's sake I would have liked to have gotten through to Oswego, but still I was very glad that it was all over for the season.

Captain Finn had money from the bank in Thorold, and paid the men off, who all seemed happy and in much need of a good warming.

Frank was going to Chicago, but he and Fraser remained with me that day to make everything snug. Jim had saved seven hundred dollars on the *Trinidad*. I never



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met him again, so he may have stayed ashore with his widowed mother, whom he loved and cared for.

Captain Finn told me that they often had a thaw in January, so he left sail and gear on his boat, and hoped to sail her to Oswego, deliver his cargo, and receive his freight money.

Captain Finn and I reached Oswego on December third, and I sent for the money I had left with John Thorburn, and, when I drew my savings out of the bank, found I had ten hundred and fifty dollars, beside the two hundred I had sent home. That seemed a lot to me, and its purchasing power was three times greater then than today.

The Captain and his wife urged me to bring my bride out, and they would take us into their home until we looked around and made a home of our own. Pat Finn had become very fond of his boyish looking mate, and I had a deep respect for him.

Mr. Madden was still using crutches, and was very glad to see me when I called on him. The Captain told him all about our run down Lake Erie, wing and wing, and also told me, as I parted from him, that it was an experience he would never forget.

I thought some times during that night, myself, that we might not make Port Colborne safely, and that I would not reach Glasgow. Those wicked, short seas struck the *Trinidad* with such force that they rolled her over so that the main boom was in danger of being snapped off, as it dragged through the water.

I was surely safe, now, however, as I was on a train to New York, and all I had to do was to take passage on a steamer, and I would be home, and the long separation from my dear ones would be over.

## CHAPTER XI

### *Back to Salt Water, and Wedding-Bells*

MY imagination was in good working order, and I tried to figure how long it would take us to give and take our first sweet kiss; well, I was just like any other youngster in love. It filled all my horizon, and excluded everything else. Love had done wonders for me, and kept me from yielding to temptations which were continually thrown in my pathway, away, as I was, from all home restraints. The love of a good, Christian girl is far above rubies; it is priceless.

In my sweetheart's home the family had to gather at the close of every day for family worship. A Psalm was sung, and the Word was read, and then the Father would pray God to bless and guard them in the night watches. From such a home, one is very likely to get a good wife.

Flappers were unknown in my boyhood days, under that designation, at least, but they were around, just the same, under other names. Fourteen-year-old Susan Auld might have entered into that class, but she was charming in any class.

But I must get on to Glasgow!

Upon my arrival in New York I found myself on Chambers and West Streets, and engaged a room in a combined saloon and rooming house.

I went aboard of a State Line steamer next morning, and met an officer on deck who proved to be the chief mate. I asked him for a chance to work my passage to



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Glasgow, and, after asking me many questions, he said, "Yes."

I had fully intended to pay for my passage, and rest up, but I had gotten all the rest I required, so thought this a good chance to save money. This was on December sixth.

The next morning while lighting a cigar I passed out through the saloon of the hotel, when a man stopped to do the same, and made a remark about the weather. He told me that he was a stranger, and had just come from Cleveland the night before, and would like to see some of New York, as he didn't sail for Europe until Saturday. I asked him what boat he was going on, and he said it was the *State of Pennsylvania*.

Simple kid as I was, I said, "That is the ship I am going on."

He was delighted to hear that, and seemed to have elicited from the bartender the information that I had been on the Lakes.

The bartender advised that a good way to pass the time would be to go on Broadway, and see the parade in honor of General Grant, who was in New York attending Horace Greeley's funeral. I fell for the plan and we walked up Chambers Street. At the corner of Church Street my friend became dry, and suggested a drink. We went into a corner bar-room, and ordered beer. He excused himself, and went through a screen, and was gone about three minutes. He returned, drank his beer, and started to walk out the door. I was positive that the drinks were not paid for, and, as he was treating, reminded him about paying for the beer.

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on the way. He looked careworn, and very much perturbed over something.

He finally told me that most of his crew had left, as they could very easily get sixty dollars for the run to any part of Europe. But what particularly bothered him was that all his officers except the chief mate had left, including the boatswain.

We went to his agent's office, where he asked me to take the second mate's position, and as he could see that I was in a hurry to get to Glasgow, offered me seventy-five dollars for the run, and regular second mate's wages until we left New York.

I knew that it would be no easy job to go second mate on that big ship, with a crowd of runners for sailors, but I would be about eighty-five dollars richer when I got to Glasgow.

My marriage date had been set for the fourteenth of January, and the *Strathern* was supposed to leave on the thirteenth of December. Even if we made the passage in thirty days, I would arrive in Glasgow on the twelfth of January.

I had my second mate's certificate, so I joined the *Strathern* next day, and went to Smith and McNeils for my baggage.

The chief mate of the *State of Pennsylvania* was very nice to me when I thanked him for the chance to work my way, and asked how I had changed my mind. I told him that I was going in the *Strathern* as second mate, and that I had been third with Jarman in the *Gleniffer*.

He remarked, "Jarman is some driver," and wished me a safe passage.

I was not taking the easy road to Glasgow, but the love



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and ease which would await me there soothed my soul. I never got much real joy out of taking the soft, easy road in life, but have always found a lot of pleasure in doing, or trying to do, a hard task.

We loaded corn in the lower hold, and barrel flour in the 'tween deck, and I never left the hold when the long-shoremen were working.

We could not look for anything but stormy weather, at this time of year. The chief mate was a man about fifty, and a good sailor, but he did not seem happy.

The *Strathern* had been launched with the idea that she would outsail any ship in the Montreal trade. The steward told me that the *Gleniffer* had beaten her by five days, on the round trip from Glasgow to Montreal, under the command of the man who was mate with Jarman in 1870. He also told me that the Captain tried to make up for the lack of speed in the *Strathern* by inordinate driving, and that the ship just buried herself, and would not go over twelve knots. That was why the second mate had left.

I knew that Jarman did not relish looking at any ship passing him, and was very cross, and hard to put up with when he was challenged. I was booked for a hard trip, but was determined to see it through, and keep cool. The goal was still ahead, and I was quite fit, as the few days' rest had done me good.

We picked up a man, through the British Consul, who had been second mate of a British ship. This man was made third mate, and was in my watch. The Captain found a very good man for boatswain, so everything depended on the sailors.

The runners were brought aboard mostly by boarding

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house keepers, and were rather a motley crew. There were two colored men, and a few Scandinavians. The remainder were English, Irish, and a few of Irish extraction who hailed from New York and Boston. There were six sailors and two apprentices who had not deserted the ship, and they were dependable in case of any trouble.

One of the apprentices, a Glasgow lad, told me that he had heard some of the men talking about our Captain, and saying that his crew had deserted because he was such a driver, and that they would show him how to drive a ship, before they got across the western ocean. Well, here I was in a mix-up again, and I soon to be a "groom." I certainly did not want to be laid up, or maimed in any way, and it was up to me to avoid trouble.

All went along quietly, and, with the wind from the N.N.E., we were just able to lay our course. On the twenty-ninth of December we were nine hundred miles from Tory Island, the first land usually seen going from North America to Glasgow. The wind hauled ahead, and then into the southeast, and finally settled in the southwest, and the next day it freshened so that the royals were furled, and then the mizzen top-gallant sail was taken in and furled.

Then the trouble started in old-fashioned style, when the order was given to clew up the fore top-gallant sail. It was beginning to blow, and no one came out of the forecabin to carry out the orders of the Captain and the mate. I was asleep, it being my watch below, and the six sailors who had remained in the ship were also in their bunks.

It was about eleven P.M. The mate went along the



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weather side of the deck to let go the top-gallant halliards, but the yard did not come down. What trouble was this, staring us in the face of wind and fury!

Captain Jarman ran forward, and a billet of wood came from the top of the forward deck house, and struck him on the right arm and jaw. His arm was broken at the wrist, and his jaw fractured. I was called on deck, and assisted him aft. Then the mate went forward and very boldly called all hands on deck.

The steward attended to the Captain's injuries, and, assisted by the mate, set his broken arm, and bound up the jaw as best they could.

Several of the men were missing when I gave the order to clew up the main top-gallant sail, just as a squall struck the ship. The fore top-gallant mast went over the side. It was pitch dark, with some mess to clear away.

I ran forward and let go the topsail halliards, as the wreck of the broken mast might endanger the topmast. We also furled the mizzen topsail, and then went to work on saving what we could on the foremast, and also to prevent the broken spar from doing damage. We furled the crossjack, and reefed the mainsail, hoping to have the ship under control if the crew was inclined to be mutinous.

Those of the crew who had any common-sense knew they would never get away with such doings, and that the police flag would be flying, and punishment meted out to the man who had racked the halliards, which act led to the loss of the mast. But, the atmosphere quieted down through fear, and we cleared away the wreck, and everything was done without a murmur, until we made the land on the fifth of January, after which everyone did more work than he was asked to do.

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There were two witnesses who could testify to seeing a sailor from Boston go up the rigging about nine o'clock, with a piece of spun yarn, and rack the halliards. One of the apprentices, and a sailor, saw a runner named McGee throw the billet of wood that struck Captain Jarman.

We signalled a tug as we passed Lamlash, and, as the tide suited, we did not anchor; but we had the police boat come off in response to our signal which was hoisted before we got to Gourrock.

The two men were put under arrest. The man who racked the halliards got a year in Duke Street Jail, and the one who threw the wood got nine months, and a tongue lashing from the magistrate.

Captain Jarman received a lesson which probably stood him in good stead—that the reputation of being a driver did not get his ship through the water any faster. In a year or so he was put in command of a four-masted ship, full rigged on the four masts, and when he drove her, he got results, as she was built on very fine lines. She ran with the old *City of Berlin*, an Inman Line steamer, from New York to Queenstown, and, when the gale freshened, the *Romsdal* would get ahead of the steamer while the latter was doing sixteen knots. That was a passage Jarman enjoyed much better than the one I made with him in the *Strathern*.

I had written to Aggie, and my folks, that I was coming to Glasgow in the *State of Pennsylvania*, and, by the next mail, they opened a letter saying that I was coming second mate of the *Strathern*. They anxiously visited the Allan Line office several times each day.

We docked on the seventh of January, twenty-five days



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from New York. I am sure that the *Gleniffer* would have done it in eighteen, with the same winds.

I did not expect my darling to be at the wharf to meet me. However, my young brother and my sweetheart's brother, John, were at the Allan Line wharf with greetings. I could not leave the ship until everything was cleared up, and the hatches opened to see if the cargo was in good condition.

After these things were attended to, we drove to my home in the east end of the city. Aggie was at the door, and how can I describe that meeting? I felt like having a good cry, for I must confess that my nerves were weakened under the strain of "sea pepper." Aggie did break down, and sobbed in my arms as if her heart would break. She and my Mother had put in an anxious time when the *Strathern* did not arrive from New York in twenty days.

My Mother left us alone in the parlor, and I got the girl calmed down, and we had a sweet half hour together, such as can come only to those who love one another as we did, and meet after such a separation.

I had been foolish enough to write home and tell about the narrow escape from death I had on the *Cavilier*, and that had upset them. Boy like, I could not refrain from relating all my adventures, and did not realize what anxiety I was giving them.

Anticipation would soon be fruition, and Aggie and I just enjoyed every moment we could be together. We had no cares or worries, and I felt that the future, and my prospects in life, could be forgotten for a time, and we just kissed, and cuddled, and enjoyed the present. I was invited to supper with Aggie's parents the day after my arrival, and was formally taken into the family.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Overboard on the Banks*

AFTER spending two happy months with Aggie, and establishing a little love nest for her, I shipped as second mate on the *Roseneath*, a clipper ship. I would never have gotten the job if Captain Jarman had not gone personally to Captain McVicar, who commanded the *Roseneath*, and asked him to ship me.

Captain Jarman was kept ashore to superintend the outfitting and rigging of the four-masted ship *Romsdal*, which was to be ready for sea in about five months. Jarman told me that two voyages under Captain McVicar would be splendid education for me, and said that I could have the second mate's position on the *Romsdal*.

I have tried to tell in a simple way about my experiences at sea in the days of both the wooden and the iron clipper ships. Aided by a good memory I have given the names of the Captains and men with whom I sailed, hoping that some of their kinfolk will be interested in reading of them.

What a contrast there is between the transatlantic liners of today, and the old, sailing ships of seventy years ago! I treasure a picture of a model of the brigantine *Jean*, the pioneer vessel of the Allan Line fleet, which later became incorporated in the Canadian Pacific.

The *Jean* made her maiden trip in 1818, and was quite a contrast to the *Duchess of Bedford*, recently launched for the C.P.R.



## Overboard on the Banks

I went to sea for eight years after my marriage, and had many thrilling experiences with the bushrangers in Australia, and also knew the methods employed to shanghai and rob sailors in San Francisco.

I was never nearer to passing in my checks than on the voyage when I was wrecked in the *Great Northern*, unless it was when I was struck by a lever that slipped from the hands of two sailors, and simply pushed me overboard. This happened in the month of March, on the Banks of Newfoundland. I had on heavy sea boots, and plenty of warm clothing. I was second mate on the *Roseneath*, and the mate, coming out of the cabin, saw me strike the water.

He cut adrift a life buoy from the stern rail, and threw it over, but, as the ship was making eight knots, I was at least twenty-five feet astern of the buoy. I realized at once that the sea boots would be my undoing, as I could scarcely keep afloat, and could not swim to the buoy. Having never tried to take off boots under those conditions, and struggling, I succeeded first in getting rid of my pea jacket and woolen muffler. I knew it would take at least half an hour to bring the ship to and launch a boat, and to live I had to reach that buoy. The water was icy cold, and I could not expect to resist it very long. Treading water to keep afloat, and working with my right foot to get rid of the boot on my left, I was all but drowned when the boot slipped off. The right one was not so hard, but it was fully five minutes, I think, before the white buoy could be seen.

I struggled to reach it, with the hope of shedding my pants, but my vest came off, and getting that buoy over my head seems like a dream. After they rescued me I

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was unconscious for four hours. The action of my heart was chilled, and our Captain never expected to pull me through. My struggle for life was so fierce that even the thought of my dear wife was overwhelmed by it. In two days I was able to resume my duties.

Captain McVicar had been in the *Roseneath* ever since she was launched, and had risen from boatswain to Captain. He was a thorough sailor, and I was wise enough to take his reproofs in good part, though they were given in a very brusque way.

When on the wind, that is, pointing the ship as close to the wind as possible, and yet keeping the sails full, Captain McVicar was always watching the main royal, which should have the weather leach shaking just a little. If the sail got ramping full, he would roar, "Luff, ——— you, luff," and glare at the helmsman for committing such a sin.

We went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, with a general cargo, mostly dry goods for the spring trade. It was considered quite an event when the *Roseneath* arrived in the spring.

It was good training for me to watch McVicar beat the *Roseneath* up the narrow Straits of Northumberland.

We loaded coal for Montreal, and discharged, and loaded general cargo for Glasgow. Nothing of an exciting nature occurred on the voyage except the bath I took on the way to Halifax.

McVicar had a steward who had sailed with him since the ship was built, and was drunk in every port. McVicar often carried him aboard on his back in Halifax and Montreal; but always forgave him, after cursing him heartily.



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We made the passage from Montreal to Glasgow in sixteen days, and I spent ten days with my young wife.

The *Romsdal* was just about ready to go on her loading berth, and I had a busy two weeks, seeing that the riggers had everything in place for going to sea. The *Romsdal* claimed to be the last word in marine architecture, and nothing had been built in the modern sailing ship class which could compete with her for speed, while carrying a big cargo.

She was square rigged on all four of her masts, and had double top-gallant yards, and royals above them. Her fore and main lower yards were eighty-seven feet across, and Captain Jarman had her fitted with stunsail booms on the two forward masts.

We left Glasgow on August twenty-fifth, and were fast to the wharf in Montreal in twenty-one days, carrying nineteen hundred tons of general cargo, and forty head of prize cattle.

The ten days spent in Montreal we loaded twenty-nine hundred tons of grain, flour, butter, and cheese. We were proud of our return trip, made in seventeen days, which was splendid time for a deeply loaded ship.

Steamers were being built for the increasing transatlantic trade; but for a real money maker the *Romsdal* returned more on the capital invested.

I was working like a horse, both at sea and in port, but was receiving eight pounds per month, one pound more than the second officer of an Allan Line steamer.

The keel had been laid for an increase in the Ramsay fleet, and the launching was expected to take place in November, before I could possibly get back from another voyage. No time had been lost since our marriage in

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January, and Aggie bade me good-bye with a brave heart. No thought of disaster filled our minds, and we were so happy and contented over the whole business that our cup of joy was full and running over.

We made the passage out in twenty-six days, and were eleven days in Montreal, leaving again November twenty-fourth for Glasgow.

At that time the lights in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were discontinued on November twenty-fifth. It was a hard experience—getting down the five hundred miles from Quebec to the open sea under these conditions. Anticosti Island lies in the middle of the Gulf, and it was a regular graveyard for ships which left late in the season.

A tugboat took us one hundred and twenty-five miles below Quebec, and blew his good-bye whistle, as we had our topsails set, and were just able to lay our course. Snow began to fall, and the tug could not take us to Father Point, fifty miles further. The wind drew ahead, and it was a case of beating our way in a blinding snow storm. We had Anticosti under our lee on one tack, and the mainland on the other.

The *Romsdal* was not allowed to lie dead, and drift to leeward, but was driven as if we were in clear weather. That was her salvation, I believe.

On the first of December it stopped snowing, and the wind came from the northwest. We made the island of St. Paul by dead reckoning, just as well as if we had taken observations by the sun or stars. It was a splendid piece of navigation, but what an anxious time it was for our Captain.

Three ships went on Anticosti that fall. One, an old, broken-backed ship carrying timber from Quebec, went



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down with all hands. Provisions were stored on the Island in a house built by the Canadian Government to shelter and feed shipwrecked sailors. Sometimes these would be rescued during a thaw in the fierce cold of that region. Otherwise they had to spend the winter there, and it was impossible to reach them until the end of April. The ice in the Gulf would be ten to twelve feet thick.

On the fifth of December we sighted, and exchanged signals with, the latest addition to the Cunard Fleet. We slowly drew away from her, and in the squalls we must have been going fifteen knots. From the deck of that steamer we must have been a pretty sight, as we were carrying our lower main top-gallant sail, and were shipping only an occasional sea. The steamer was rolling, and seemed to be having a much harder trip.

We made Instrahull Light just eight days from St. Paul, and were docked in Glasgow seventeen days from Montreal. This was wonderful sailing, considering the time spent in the Gulf.

I hurried home, and found that a baby girl had arrived to bless us. My dear wife was fully recovered, and in splendid condition. We had twelve happy days together, planning for and admiring our firstborn.

I left for New York before Christmas, and had a stormy passage, with fierce gales and mountainous seas, until in mid-ocean the wind came from the south, and we were able to carry enough sail to make the passage in thirty days.

We had many visitors who admired the ship and her four lofty masts. On our return trip we had a full load, being down to her marks, and were often deluged with

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water, but arrived in Glasgow safely without losing either men or gear.

I made one more voyage in the *Romsdal*, and, having had sufficient servitude as second mate, stayed ashore and attended navigation school, with the object of obtaining a chief mate's certificate. I had lost some time by going on the Lakes, as far as my career was concerned, though I have never regretted my experience. I had wanted to see what life on fresh water was like, and my desire was certainly granted.

I passed the board of examiners, much to the delight of my dear wife, who was still anxious to have her parents realize that her Bob amounted to something, and that her love and faith in me had not been misplaced.

The Anchor Line was building many ships, and, wanting to make short trips nearer home, I applied for a berth on that line. My experience as second mate in a ship like the *Romsdal* was a good reference to have in the eyes of the old sea dog, Captain Meiklereed, who was superintendent of the line. He might forgive one for drinking too much, but never for inefficiency. An officer who refused an emergency call in a life boat was fired at once. An officer, in the hard drinking days about which I am writing, would be laid off for only a month or so for taking a wee sup too much.

I was appointed fourth officer on a steamer starting on her first trip to New York. Her name was the *Alsatia*. She was barque rigged, and carried very large fore and aft sails to steady her in bad weather, and keep her from rolling. All the steamers of that day had deep keels.

Steamship building was in its infancy, and ship-



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builders were studying how to build ships that would not roll themselves to pieces.

A new steamer, the *Devonia*, was built at Barrow in Furness, and I was sent to join her as third officer. Our chief officer was a rollicking chap, a "regular guy." Possessed of a genial disposition, he was well liked, and many passengers came to his room, where card playing and drinking went on at all hours—in the officers' quarters. This became my downfall.

The Captain's name was Munro, a sturdy looking old seaman who seemed to love the old sailing ship memories.

We left Moville on a wintry day, bound for New York. It blew, as we say, a living gale, from the northwest, and the sea ran so high that, going full speed, we made only sixty miles in twenty-four hours.

We had to close reef our big fore and aft sails, and I was forced out at the end of the long, swinging booms, and rove the earing that stretches the reef band, as if I were a boatswain. Captain Munro was watching me with admiration and wonder.

Another time when I scored heavily with him was in getting the baggage from the steamer to a tender in Moville, where we called to land passengers for the north of Ireland. Our chief officer had spoken very sharply to the Captain of the tender for inefficiently handling the baggage, and delaying our steamer. This criticism was ignored, so I told a husky, well built sailor to follow me down a rope to the tender's deck. We landed on the tender at just about the same time, and I made for the crane to drive it, and told my sailor to receive the baggage as it came. The tender's Captain made a strike at me with a large monkey wrench, but my sailor struck him,

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and took the wrench and threw it overboard, while the tender's engineer came to take a hand in the fray. He had pluck, but no science, so I laid him out with one under the chin. After laying the law down to the Captain the baggage was quickly hoisted from the ship to tender, and we proceeded on our way.

Captain Munro was watching the episode from the bridge, and with a merry twinkle in his eye asked what those tender chaps were trying to do.

When we arrived in New York on the *Devonia's* first trip, there were two days set apart to entertain the public press representatives and the general public. All the officers were supposed to take care of the guests, and could order all the liquor needed for their pleasure. Another Anchor ship was in, and her officers joined us in making things agreeable for the public. Plenty of liquor was consumed that day. The company was liberal, and champagne corks popped, and everybody was in good shape for anything in the way of carousing when our guests left.

After tea, six of our officers and engineers, including the chief officer of the *Anchoria*, went ashore, and, after having a few drinks in John Hay's Scotch Saloon at the corner of Liberty and Greenwich Streets, called a carriage, and were driven to Harry Hill's famous resort. Fortunately, I was not with them, as my sister-in-law came out as a passenger in the *Devonia*, and I took her to the theater.

What form of dissipation the gang indulged in I cannot tell. There were always plenty of pretty girls ready for a drink in Harry's, and anything else that had money at the end of it.



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The girls were rather high class, and Harry Hill did not countenance any robbery or bilking, which meant getting a man's money and giving nothing in return. If the girls could persuade a man to order a bottle of champagne at six dollars per, to be drunk in each girl's little bedroom, she received a commission.

The gang had ordered the carriage driver to wait, and, after spending an hour with the ladies, came out and found the carriage, but not the driver. McPhee was the chief officer on the *Anchoria*, and he told his cronies to get in, and he would drive the coach. The first corner McPhee attempted to turn, the coach got foul of a lamp post, and lost a hind wheel.

The driver came running after them, and a crowd gathered. A policeman hove in sight, and McPhee was arrested; but a friend bailed him out in about an hour.

A vivid account of the affair was in the morning papers, and caused much laughter that the mate of the S.S. *Anchoria* could not steer a coach.

About a month after this incident, McPhee got command of a small steamer, and six months after was made assistant marine superintendent. He succeeded Meiklered a few years later.

If an officer employed in the company I mention was identified these days with an episode such as McPhee was in, he would likely get his walking ticket when he arrived in Glasgow.

I was learning to drink whiskey, and it was a great sorrow to my dear wife. How many pledges I signed, and broke! If I had stuck to the hard life on the sailing ships it would have been better for me.

The end came soon, and perhaps it was for the best.

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The sailors went on strike for more pay, and the owners refused to give it, and we shipped a scab crew. They were the worst bunch of scoundrels I ever had on a ship. We caught them stealing from the passengers, and we treated them roughly.

One passage I made while third officer of the *Devonia*, from New York to Glasgow, in the month of November, 1877, stands out very clearly in my memories of the past.

We sighted a steamer right ahead, and by her rig and color of her smoke-stack could see at once that she was an Anchor Liner. It proved to be the *Bolivia*, bound to New York.

Several hours before we sighted her the main shaft had broken, and she asked us, by signal flags, if we would give her a spare clamp.

Fortunately we had an extra clamp, and, as she was helpless, we did the manœuvring. Getting to windward of her, we lowered a life boat, which was in charge of the Chief Officer, and manned by volunteers.

The life boat rounded the *Bolivia's* stern, and got on her lee side, while it was blowing a gale from the north-west, but after trying several times the big clamp was finally hooked onto a tackle on the main yard.

Our Captain got the *Devonia* to leeward of the *Bolivia*, and, though the gale was increasing, we hooked our life boat onto the tackles and led the falls to winches, and hoisted it up.

The *Devonia* was rolling rails under, and in getting the men out of the life boat, our Chief Officer, Mr. Allan, got slammed against the ship, and if a rope had not been fast under his arms, we would have lost him. His legs



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were so badly bruised that the doctor worked over him with liniments and hot cloths all that night.

The *Bolivia's* engine crew repaired the broken shaft in thirty-six hours, and proceeded to New York. If the *Bolivia* had been towed to the nearest port, which was St. John's, Newfoundland, it would have cost several thousand pounds.

I was put in charge of the Chief Officer's watch, and the next day, about ten o'clock, sighted a vessel ahead which looked like a lightship that had loosened from her moorings. Finally, with the aid of binoculars, I could see it was a two-masted craft, with only the stump of the main-mast standing. An Ensign, Union down, was flying from the main rigging, and a string of flags informed us that they were sinking. The northwest gale had increased, and heavy squalls just picked off the tops of the seas and deluged our decks.

The dismasted vessel was rolling badly, and the seas were relentlessly sweeping across her decks. Her crew of eight were in the rigging, trying to keep from being washed overboard.

The *Devonia* was deeply loaded with grain and provisions, and when our Captain brought the sea on our beam, a heavy sea boarded us, and injured several of our crew.

But, we lost no time in getting out a life boat, and I was ordered by Captain Munro to take charge of it. The second officer wanted to go, but Munro said he had better let Ramsay go, as I was much younger. The second was a good sailor, but weighed two hundred pounds, and was very heavy and awkward.

I realized, in a sense, that a hard job was ahead of me,

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yet it gave me no fear. That I might never get back on the *Devonia* did not bother me, and the splendid way the life boat acted just gave me a thrill. When we got near the wreck a heavy squall came on, and I had to keep the life boat head to sea for about ten minutes. When the wind lulled we got as close to the vessel as possible, and succeeded in dragging the eight men into our boat.

Captain Munro had placed the *Devonia* to leeward of the wreck, and I steered for her, and rounded to under her lee. Willing hands threw ropes, and hauled the shipwrecked men on board. One of the sailors and myself hooked the tackles, and we were hoisted up.

We tried our best to save the life boat as the ship rolled, and managed to get it into the chocks with only three planks broken.

Several of the young ladies tried to kiss me as I went into the saloon on my way to my cabin. One charming girl did kiss me, not on the ear, but on my lips, and I made no resistance. She was a peach, about eighteen years of age, and nobody was inclined to censure me for yielding to her kindly embrace.

The Captain of the wrecked craft was given a room in the cabin, and his mate and the sailors got berths in the second cabin. All were given dry clothes, and, after a warm bath, soon recovered from the exposure.

The Captain told us that many hours before they sighted us the boat had been struck by a heavy squall which carried away the foremast close to the deck, as well as the main topmast, and also ten feet of the mainmast. The vessel was brigantine rigged, and carried a foresail, two topsails, and a top-gallant sail on the foremast. With axes and hatchets they had cut the laniards of the rigging,



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and were able to get the yards clear of the ship, as they threatened to damage the hull.

When the foremast snapped close to the deck it ripped the planks, and allowed the sea to come into the hold. The crew was taken off when she was about half full of water.

The name of the wrecked vessel was the *Zuleika*, and she hailed from Conception Bay, Newfoundland, and was loaded with dry, salted fish from Labrador, to be unloaded at Genoa, Italy.

Captain Munro spoke very kindly to me when I relieved him on the bridge. He said that I had handled the life boat very well, but thought I was going to lose my life in trying to save the life boat. The Captain was a thorough old salt, trained, like myself, on the old, wooden clippers. While he was reproving me for taking risks I could see the twinkle in his eye, indicating that he had enjoyed everything connected with the saving of the men from the sinking ship.

The *Zuleika* took her last plunge about forty-five minutes after we took the crew off, and were proceeding on our way.

About two months afterward I was presented with a medal, and a present of ten pounds, and Captain Munro received a gold medal. Our Captain had received many medals and gifts for saving life at sea, but the gift he prized most was a gold chronometer from President Fillmore for rescuing the crew of the Boston ship *Living Age*, which was wrecked on Pratas Shoal in the China Sea in December, 1855.

We called at Halifax, Nova Scotia, to land about five hundred tons, principally dry goods. Tom Henderson was a passenger, and also senior member of the owners

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of the Anchor Line. We were a full day unloading at Halifax, and were in trouble all the time with our crew, who managed to get our sail covers ashore, and sold them for junk, buying whiskey with the proceeds.

We had a gay lot among our first cabin passengers, and drinking and gambling in the officers' quarters had been going on daily. If I had kept strictly sober, and everyone else had done the same, we would have managed the crew differently.

Our fourth officer was ready for a scrap, and when three of the worst characters on the ship tackled us on the wharf, we sailed in and licked them.

We were to sail about seven P.M. and Campbell, myself, and some passengers went up the street that skirts the docks, for a last drink. We were already "sitting pretty"! We all left the saloon and started down the lane leading to the ship, but I ran back to light my cigar. As I came out of the saloon one of our bum sailors tried to trip me. I went over his foot, and swung with all my strength for his jaw, and down he went.

A policeman was passing, and arrested me for assault. He did not see the sailor trip me, but the second officer of an Allan Line steamer told the cop that he had seen the man trip me up.

But it was no use. Here was a chance to arrest an officer of a steamer, and collect a fine. All day our sailors had been roaming the streets, drunk, but the cops knew there would be no fine paid for them.

The Allan Line officer hurried down to our ship and told our chief mate what had happened. The ship was ready to leave, and our Captain was much provoked that such a thing should happen with Tom Henderson aboard.



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He wanted to leave me, but Mr. Henderson was an old sailor, and had been through such happenings before.

So, he sent the purser up to bail me out at any cost, and the passengers had collected fifty dollars, and insisted that they wished to bail me out.

I was fined ten dollars, which the purser paid, while the cop waited to take me down to the ship, which I resented very much. The gangway was landed, and even our owner had tired of waiting for my coming. The head lines had been slacked, and the ship was eight feet away from the dock. They threw me a line, which I held with my left hand, and swiped the cop with my right, knocking his head back. I jumped, and struck the ship's side with my feet, climbed up, and went to my room.

Tom Henderson and our Captain were on the bridge and saw the whole show. The second steward overheard Mr. Henderson tell Captain Craig not to hold this Halifax affair against me, blaming the scab sailors. Captain Craig told Henderson that I was a very good officer, and suited him all right.

But, trouble was brewing for Bob Ramsay! Long-shoremen in New York were on strike, and the company hired strikebreakers who were just the scrapings, and bum class; and I had to look after the loading on the forward end, and was having a hard time trying to make them work. We succeeded in loading the ship, and the marine superintendent, Captain Nicol, spoke very nicely to me, offering me a place as his foreman. He praised me to Captain Craig, and I would have squeezed out of my Halifax affair all right if the discovery of forty hogsheds of sugar which should have been discharged in Halifax, but had come to New York, had not occurred. They had

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to be returned to Halifax, and because they were landed in New York without being mentioned on the ship's manifest, it made trouble with the customs people.

Tom Henderson, writing home to his son, Charles, in Glasgow, could only say that if the third officer had not gone on a jamboree in Halifax, the sugar would have been unloaded there. The sugar was in the after hold, and I was in charge of the forward holds.

I had won seven pounds playing cards on the passage to Halifax, and the chief mate won thirteen, playing a game called Napoleon. My partner was a fruit dealer on Barclay Street, and we were doing a good business shipping apples to Glasgow. I sent the apples down to the dock just in time to put into the ship, so that they would be well ventilated, and also be the first articles discharged in Glasgow. I carried nothing but high class apples, such as Newton Pippins, and sold them to a fashionable store in the west end of Glasgow. My name never appeared in the transaction. I had made two hundred pounds in this way.

When we arrived in Glasgow the marine superintendent sent for me, and said that Captain Munro had requested him to send me to Barrow in Furness to join the new steamer *Circassia*, as second officer, but that word had been received from Charles Henderson to fire me, and fired I was.

Meiklereed said he was sorry, as both Captain Munro and Captain Craig had given him a very good report as to my ability.

"The idea," Meiklereed said, "of you brawling with a lot of sailors;" and added, "I always thought you were a gentleman."



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I did not want Aggie to know that I had been discharged from the Anchor Line, so I went out as usual, just as if I was still on the *Devonia*.

One day I came in and told her that I was going on a new ship to Sydney, New South Wales, as first mate, and as I would be gone a year, would try to pass the board of examiners for a Captain's certificate upon my return.

I wrote to Captain Munro, thanking him for trying to put me second officer on the *Circassia*, and asked him if he could give me a reference so I could get a ship as mate. He gave me a fine character, so I had no trouble in getting chief mate on a large sailing vessel. Of course I also had a character from Captain Jarman.

My sweetheart cried, and it took me some time to persuade her that I was doing the right thing. Finally my wife said, "Go, and make this trip, and I will bear it; but promise me, dear, that you will leave whiskey alone."

## CHAPTER XIII

### *A Voyage to Sydney and Woolomoloo Jail*

**M**Y new ship was called the *Cynisca*. The Captain was of the type of men who never look one in the eye, and always wore a cynical grin on his face. After looking him over for a few minutes I was inclined to tell him that he could look for another mate. Then I got engrossed in seeing the ship properly loaded, and making a plan of the stowage.

The Captain did not appear very often, but when he did, had the same sardonic grin on his face. Never a pleasant word.

I told my sweetheart about him, and she said at once, "You will never stand that; why not leave, you are not signed on?"

I said, "No; I am going; even though he were the devil himself, he will not down me."

Agnes made the old stipulation, "Bob, if you leave drink alone, I can trust you to do the right thing."

Another little girl had arrived six months before, and she reminded me that the stocks were laid for another addition to the increasing Ramsay fleet. Those were not the days when a solitary chick, or a poodle dog, engrossed all the attention of a married couple.

I never felt so depressed, and sad, at any parting from my Aggie, as I did on this voyage. She was a gift from Heaven, and just loved and trusted me when I promised to leave whiskey alone. The thought of the two little



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ones should have made it impossible for me to break my promise.

With a new ship, the lanyards of the rigging often stretched, and had to be set up. Chafing gear had to be made, and put on, all over the ship. So, I had to keep the men on deck for a week, in their afternoon watch below, before everything was O K. Never a word of approval from the Captain—just the old grin on his face, as if he was not on good living terms with himself.

We had two young men as passengers. One was threatened with tubercular trouble, and the other was quite lively, and I enjoyed his company. The Captain, in his usual grouchy way, found fault with something that this fellow did, and the young man resented it and told the Captain so in very plain language. I heard the Captain tell him that he was judge and jury on board ship, and could put him in irons if he did not do as he was ordered.

The squall passed over, but I could see that the young man kept his distance from the Captain.

A ship named the *Socrates* passed us, running the easting. She was one of the fleet owned by the Aberdeen White Star Line, carrying passengers from London to Sydney. Beautiful ships they were, and made fast passages, the average being eighty days.

I ignored our fault-finding Captain, and walked away from him, fearing I should lose my temper, and thus put myself in his power.

We were four months on the passage, and were scarcely over-dry during the last six weeks. One night while we were running with the three lower topsails set, with the wind on the quarter, the man at the wheel let the ship

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come up at least two points, bringing the sea broad on our quarter. A terrific wave came tumbling after us, and I ran up on a platform connected by a little gangway from the poop to the standard compass, while the sea filled our decks, and took one of our boats entirely away, smashing the other. I grabbed the wire ropes on the gangway, and hung on, stretched out so that my arms felt as if torn from the sockets. I had been banged against the rail so that I was unable to walk, and had to crawl back to the poop.

Of course I blamed the incident on the helmsman, but he claimed that he was only one half point to windward of his course when the sea boarded us. It was what I might call an erratic sea, often met in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was more like a tidal wave than anything else.

The Captain yelled out of the cabin door, very much excited, and I told him that it was a tidal wave, and described how it had boarded us while the regular sea was still on our quarter. After telling him I was badly hurt, and unable to stand, he was forced to take my watch for three days.

We arrived in Sydney, August, 1878, after a long passage of one hundred and twenty-three days. Sydney has one of the most capacious harbors in the world. The entrance from the Pacific is very narrow, and is considered dangerous for a ship to go in with even a fair wind. Between the high cliffs a good breeze is apt to become a calm, and a ship can easily drift ashore.

The clipper ship *Helen Dunbar* tried to make the narrow passage at night, so as to have it said that she made the passage in sixty-one days, the record passage being



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sixty-two days. She went ashore at the entrance, and only one man was saved out of the one hundred and twenty men, women, and children who were aboard. Records were more keenly fought for in the clipper ship days than they are now in the transatlantic trade.

When I went to Sydney I had the thought in mind of seeing an old friend of my boyhood days, who had left Glasgow in a sailing ship for Sydney, and the ship was sold, and he was paid off there, but never returned to Glasgow. His folks in Glasgow were very fine people, and his father was our Elder in the Presbyterian Church we attended. I will call him just plain John.

I found John living on what they call the "rocks" in Sydney. At one time Sydney was a penal settlement, and the worst criminals that England produced were transported to the vicinity of Sydney. A great many of what were called "ticket of leave men," and their descendants, lived on the rocks. John was a waster, and did not care to work much, but when he did, would get a job as cook on a coasting steamer. His wife was a hustler—she had to be, or starve.

Just to show what kind of folks I had drifted among, I will mention a young girl, sixteen years of age, who was a visitor at my friend's house. She had a sweet face, was well mannered, and I thought she was much above the company. The foreman stevedore told me she had a child six months before, and that her father was hung. John's step-daughter was fifteen years of age, and about to become a mother. The growler, as they called a two gallon can, was kept busy going between John's home and the saloon. In the morning a drink of brandy was the favorite—"tip o' the mornin'." The spirituous liquors in

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Australia were a sort of combination of Peruvian pisco, and what they dispensed in the old bar-room days in New York at five cents a drink.

The insane wards of the Sydney jails were full of men and women made crazy from indulging in the terrible stuff they sold in 1879.

I was drinking too much, especially the first two weeks in Sydney, but, remembering my promise to Aggie, tried to keep away from the rocks and behaved very well.

We had only another week to lay in Sydney, being nearly loaded with wool, and copper bars, when our cook was reported missing. Policemen were notified, and a hunt started.

Sailors were punished very severely in Australia for deserting a ship. This rule was a relic of the old, gold-digging days, when entire crews deserted, just as they did in Frisco in 1850. A cop came aboard and reported to the Captain that a man was sleeping off a spree in a cheap hotel, and that it might be our cook.

I had enjoyed a few drinks that day, and when the Captain ordered me to identify the cook I felt like refusing; but was afraid to give the Captain any cause for fault finding, which would probably end in my losing control of myself, and a fight. I fancied that he would be glad to get rid of me, and I tried to let him know that I held him in utter contempt.

When the policeman took me to the hotel the landlord was much excited when accused of harboring a deserter, claiming that he came there as an ordinary roomer. When the policeman asked me if the man who lay there sleeping was our cook, I shook my head and sadly said that I had never seen him before.



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When I went aboard the *Cynisca* the Captain was in a furious rage. The policeman had informed the Captain of my decision, and the suspicious Captain had sent the steward, who identified the beast as our lost cook. Alas, the cook slept in jail that night.

The Captain let his tongue run loose, but I kept real quiet, because I was anxious to get back to England in this ship. He threatened to have me arrested, and jailed, but when he chided me for being absent from the ship for nearly two hours, something within me broke, and I told him to shut up, or I would break his jaw.

He walked toward me in a rather menacing way, so I invited him to fight. I suppose he thought that someone would come between us, and he would escape a licking, but still be able to get me arrested for assault. I blackened his eyes, and bruised his lips, and, as no one took his part, he ran down the cabin stairs. I followed him, but did not strike, and asked him to be a man, and give me a discharge from the ship. He sent an apprentice boy for a policeman.

The Captain appeared in court next morning with his disfigured face, and the magistrate said that it was a very serious offense to strike a Captain on a ship. I spoke up in my defense, and related how the Captain had talked to me, and his general attitude toward everybody under him. I believe a first class lawyer could have cleared me, and I think that the magistrate should have taken into account that the Captain was big enough to lick me, and settle the difficulty without having me put in jail, but instead of giving me the usual sentence for such an offense, he gave me a month in Woolomoloo Jail, situated on the outskirts of Sydney.

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I told the Magistrate that my chief mate's certificate was in the Captain's custody, and asked permission to go, under guard, to my ship, and secure my books, nautical instruments, and clothes. I also asked him to instruct the Captain to take me to the shipping office, not only to sign off, but to receive my wages. The Magistrate, after asking if I was married, granted my request.

I sent for a friendly member of the firm which was agent for the ship, and who detested the Captain. He took charge of my belongings, and I gave him my wife's address so that he could forward my wages. How glad I was that I had been able to leave two hundred pounds with her when I left for Australia!

Night came, and I was broken hearted over my sad plight, but was not repentant over mauling the Captain's face. I cannot say, with any degree of exactness, that I am sorry now for licking him. Men like him do not deserve anything but a shut fist.

I met the second mate a few years later, and he said that the passengers were delighted to hear the news that the Captain had been given his deserts, and also that the new mate kept the Captain in his place, all the way home to England.

My bad temper, which I called standing up for my rights, had beckoned me into this trouble. The terrible disgrace of the whole affair bewildered me. I knew that Aggie would never let her folks know why I did not go back in the *Cynisca*.

Being fired from the Anchor Line was bad business, but this was ten times worse. A jail sentence, for "doing nothing," reminded me of the prediction made by the man who was boatswain of the *City of Montreal*, when I



## *A Voyage to Sydney and Woolomoloo Jail*

landed in jail in Callao. He said that I would be hung some day for "doing nothing." It did look as if his prophecy was coming true.

Little did I think that anyone I knew would be in Woolomoloo Jail, but when I was put to work making mats, I found that the man next to me was Jack Gardner, who had been a sailor on the *City of Montreal*, and deserted in Melbourne, and joined a gang of bushrangers with whom he had been associated before.

He did not know me, as the change in me from a boy of fifteen to a man of twenty-eight was so great. I recognized him at once, but for a full day did not let on that I knew him.

Every newcomer had to tell why they were put in, and when I started to tell my tale I turned to Jack, and said, "Don't you remember the boy, Bob, on the *City of Montreal*?" Jack did, and we got real chummy.

There were generally two men in each cell, and Jack's mate was in the hospital with tubercular trouble, so Jack succeeded in getting me put into his cell. All the bushrangers doing time had influence through paying friends, and were treated better than the other inmates.

They were convicted for murder or highway robbery, and their sentence was life imprisonment, which they placed at fifteen years. It was not expected that they would live that long, and were comforted with thirty months off for good behavior. At the end of the twelve and a half years they must leave the country, and their passage must be paid by friends, or a ship found for them, so as to rid the country of their presence. Such were my associates in jail.

A tall, muscular Scotchman who was caught in a bank

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robbery in which a policeman lost his life, barely escaped the hangman's noose, as it could not be proven that he did the killing.

Just a word about the treatment given the inmates of this jail. For breakfast and supper we were served "skilly." It was made like cornmeal porridge, and very thin. Worst of all, the allowance of salt was so small that we could not afford to use it in the skilly, preferring to keep it for our soup at the midday meal. One half pound of bread made up our ration for the day. The small portion of salt was a deliberate punishment, planned to make the inmates have no desire to visit the jail again. We were kept in big, iron cages, and were allowed to consort in groups for an hour each day.

Another man and I found some buttons, and tried to play checkers, but were observed by a guard, and the next morning we were tried by the governor, and enjoyed a trip of four days' confinement in a small, dark dungeon. Each morning a half pound of bread and a can of water was shoved in to me by an unsympathizing guard. There was no danger of getting indigestion in Woolomoloo, but plenty of time for meditation. My sea experiences thus far had been full of mystery—and maybe mockery!

Jack Gardner had served ten years of his twelve and a half when I became his cellmate. The first year he had spent in the hospital, as his gang of seven bushrangers had been ambushed by fifteen mounted police, and four of them killed. Jack said that not a soul in Australia knew what part of Scotland he came from, but he told me all about his folks, and asked me to see them when I got back. Jack said the bushrangers, back in the years



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past, were well organized, and, because they never robbed poor people, had plenty of sympathizers.

San Francisco was the haven where all the deported criminals from Australia hurried to, and Gardner said that he had a fund of five thousand pounds there, with which he intended to open a saloon and gambling house, as soon as he was free. He seemed to think that I was to be trusted, and was quite interested when I told him about the wife and children. He gave me a note to a man who kept a notorious gambling house and bar-room in Sydney, telling him to give me one hundred pounds, to help me over the hill. He also wrote this man to send two hundred and fifty pounds to his mother, if I found her alive and sent back her address.

Money was available to supply all the wants of the ex-bushrangers. Two of my workmates were men about thirty-two years of age, whose terms of twelve and one half years were nearly up. They boastfully told me that plenty of money was on hand to pay for their passages to Frisco, and also to give them a start in business.

There must have been some brand of honesty among that band of thieves, or those on the outside would not have held so much money to provide for Gardner and many others.

There were men in that jail for all kinds of crimes; some unmentionable, and others, like myself, just unfortunate. Sailors from English men-of-war generally got six weeks in jail, three of which were to be spent in a solitary dungeon, on rations of bread and water. The Admiral on that station told the governor that he was not severe enough with his men, else they would have a dread of ever returning to Woolomoloo. A little human

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sympathy and kindness would have done more to reform the young sailors than all the harsh measures in use at that time.

The day of my release came, and my farewell to Jack Gardner, dividing our paths in life, never to be crossed again.

I was given one shilling and made my way to the city, where I found all my clothes, papers, and instruments intact. My friend who had cared for them asked me what I intended to do, suggesting that he could immediately find work for me on a White Star sailing ship, so I worked at wool jamming, or screwing the wool, and found it to be interesting work, with the idea that perhaps it would be best to settle in Australia, considering that I had made such a muddle of my career.

But, the work seemed uncertain, and for days we would be waiting the arrival of wool.

My new chum was a young Scotchman whom I had met in Sydney, and he proposed that we go to Melbourne, where he was more acquainted. I was becoming more reckless every day—unsettled.

I had no trouble in collecting the hundred pounds from the friend whom Gardner had written, and I sent it straight to Aggie, realizing my only comfort was the knowledge that the little family were well provided for.



## CHAPTER XIV

### *Diving in Shark-infested Waters*

MY chum and I shipped in a steamer for the run to Melbourne. This vessel had been in the provision trade to Queensland, and was going for repairs, in ballast, and was so full of rats that we had to leave the fore-castle and sleep aft in the fore-cabin. I wakened one night and found a rat trying to eat the hair from the back of my neck. I grabbed it and threw it on the floor, but was bitten in the thumb. If we lowered a baited trap into the fore-castle, a fight ensued among the rats, and as we hauled up the full trap, and pointed the door toward the sea, the rats would jump out.

We were paid off, and visited friends of my chum, Jim McFarlane. Jim secured work with a rigging gang in a small shipyard, and I met an old Irishman who owned schooners which he loaded with stone ballast and sailed from up the river to Sandrige Bay, supplying ballast to ships going to load cargoes at Callao, Frisco, and other places. He offered me a job sailing the schooners, on a share plan, which I thought worth trying, and if business was good, and ships needed ballast, I could make from three to five pounds a week.

There was one schooner which had been laid up for three months, and, as there was quite a demand for ballast, we took her to the stone wharf, and loaded her, with the prospect of sailing her alongside a ship next morning, and making some money.

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But, when we reached the schooner the next morning, she had sunk. She had been idle a long time, and her seams had opened up, and down she went. My old employer was very anxious to raise her, and hired a diver at once to remove the stone ballast.

The first diver worked about three hours, and quit. We hired two more divers, and they quit within an hour. At last we found a man who started as if he would finish the job. Before we screwed on his helmet he always took a big swallow of brandy. But, he also gave up the job.

The owner was frantic, and nothing he pleaded did any good—the diver was through.

So, I offered to go down and try the job, when the diver seemed willing to lend me his suit and pumping gear. The water was only twenty-eight feet deep, and I had no trouble in working under water.

McGarvey, the owner of the schooner, had agreed to pay twenty-five pounds to the diver for loading the stone into large baskets, which were hoisted as the signal was given. McGarvey promised me twenty pounds if I finished the job.

We adjusted two sloops at the bow and the stern, and passed chains under the schooner, and hove the sloops down at low water, and succeeded in raising the vessel without hiring a wrecking gang. I did it in fifteen hours, without a stimulant. The owner paid me well, and the money went to Glasgow.

When news came from home that all was well, and that I had a son and heir, it cheered me up, and created in me a desire to work harder than ever.

The ships which we supplied with ballast had to do



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all the work of discharging the stone from the schooner to the ship.

In one month I had saved fifty pounds, including the twenty I made for being a diver.

Business was slackening, and the money which was needed in Glasgow kept work foremost in my mind. I visited the office of a firm which advertised for divers, and met the diver who had loaned me his suit, coming out of the wrecking firm's office. He assured me that I would experience no trouble in getting a job, as it was rather dangerous work. He had signed on with the wrecking firm for thirty shillings a day. He recommended me to the manager, and they hired me, after I had passed a diving test and a medical examination.

The new work proved to be on a large, full rigged vessel, the *Loch Ranza*, belonging to the Loch Line. Three weeks before she had been driven ashore in a terrible gale that lasted seven days, and had wrecked numerous vessels on the coast. Her entire crew and all the passengers were lost, with the exception of a nineteen-year-old apprentice and a young girl of twenty, named Carmichal.

The ship had been carried over a reef, and sunk in forty feet of water. How the couple got ashore safely, they could not tell. It would have created a romance if the young chap had saved the girl. I met him afterwards, as third mate of the *Loch Katrine*, and he took no credit for saving her.

This all happened at Christmas time, in 1878, but the names are fresh in my memory as I write this in January, 1930.

The wreck was lying about one hundred and eighty miles to the westward of Melbourne. We went in a

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towboat, and had a floating derrick in tow for hoisting purposes. At the eastern end of the reef there was a narrow passage, about fifty feet wide, which gave access to the basin where the wreck lay. Without this passage, salvaging the cargo would have been impossible. This basin led into a little natural harbor, big enough to shelter towboat and lighter. All these things had been carefully considered by the underwriters before they hired the wrecking outfit. The Loch Line had abandoned the ship, and collected their insurance. The owners of the merchandise had done likewise.

The largest problem to solve was the risk of an attack by sharks. I knew Australian waters were infested with a hungry species. Our air lines and life lines were covered and well protected with strong wire, and we blocked the passage to the basin with a strong wire net, after exploding several charges of dynamite to try and drive the sharks out of the basin. We even fished one whole day, and caught only three, one of which measured sixteen and a half feet. The dead sharks were hoisted onto the lighter, and towed out of the passage, and dumped overboard, to be enjoyed by their kinfolk. Every precaution was taken for our safety.

The towboat left us, and for two days we worked sending barrels and cases up, and took them to Melbourne as samples of the condition of the cargo.

There were two divers and a foreman diver, beside myself. We went down two at a time, and the air pumps were cared for by the two other divers, who sat with the life line in one hand to receive the signals to hoist or lower the derrick purchase. One of the divers on the bottom did the signalling, with his eyes and ears ever



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alert for sharks. The other diver adjusted slings on cases and barrels.

The water, perfectly clear, showed a remarkable picture of aquatic forestry. Under our keel spread submarine flora of myriad hues, in whose branches were many fish thoughtfully scratching their backs on the waving bark.

Forty-five minutes seemed to be the time considered by our chief diver as long enough to be under water. We never took our diving suits off, just unscrewed the helmets. The depth was only sixteen feet to the ship's deck, and, as she sat perfectly upright, our ladder was ample to reach the ship's deck, making the job comparatively easy.

The towboat returned with a lighter which would hold about one hundred tons; and the cargo was transferred to her from our floating derrick. We were well supplied with good food through the towboat service, and even had two pigs to eat the scraps. We killed the pigs toward the end of our expedition.

We worked ten hours for our thirty shillings per day, and worked twelve hours overtime each week, which was carefully noted down in a little book.

Our indoor sport was counting our money.

Many letters came from Scotland, urging me to hurry home and make a fresh start. Thirty-five days was the fastest delivery of mail from Scotland, via Frisco.

Fresh strength and courage came to me from every letter, especially when my Aggie said she was sure I was keeping my promise, and to remember that my wife and weans were waiting for me.

I was making nearly fifteen pounds a week, and only wished that the job would last a year. There were twenty-four hundred tons of weight and measurement freight in

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the wreck, and one part of her cargo was twenty thousand cases of good Scotch whiskey, which we handled with small wire nets. An Irish friend of mine used to say, "There's no bad whiskey; it's all good." Good or bad, we divers never tasted it until every package of cargo worth saving was removed.

The work grew harder as we struggled deeper into the hold, and had to walk back under the deck. Dangling from the wrist of the diver who did the signalling was a razor sharp knife with a ten-inch blade. A few sharks were around, and one day a large one passed and re-passed me for a full half hour. I watched him carefully, and when he half rolled over, I quickly dropped out of his way under the combings of the main hatch. I did not try to climb the ladder, as I was afraid the brute would get me while I tried to climb up in my clumsy rig. I was a prisoner unless I could kill or frighten him away.

Somewhere I had read that sharks were not intelligent. This particular one, however, worried me, and seemed determined to get on the outside of me, even if he had to swallow the diving suit. I could clearly see his every movement, and watched my chance, and as he slowly passed, drove the keen bladed knife into his belly, holding it so that when he darted away, it would rip him open.

With haste, I signalled to the deck that we were coming up, and they gathered in the slack on our lines as we mounted the ladder. It was late in the afternoon, and when I told my story, diving was suspended for the day. It seemed to me that the shark was about twelve feet long, but it is hard to estimate correctly the size under such circumstances. The chief diver had sensed that something was wrong, during the moments that elapsed



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between my sighting the shark and giving it the knife.

The next day it was our partners' turn to go down first, and I frankly admit that I wasn't sorry. The chief diver had often killed sharks under water, and admitted that going up and down the ladder was the most dangerous part of the work. The fact that a shark has to roll over to bite places him at a disadvantage, but I thought that I was the one who carried the handicap, as I was out of my element, and the shark did not have shoes that weighed fifty pounds. The chief killed a shark the next day, who was nosing around while the chief was signalling, and I filling the net with cases of whiskey.

One day we placed the lighter directly over the cabin, and the chief and myself went down. After putting our ladder in place, the chief went down into the cabin, and located a safe in the saloon, bolted to the deck. With a monkey wrench he worked on it for two shifts, and finally released it. He adjusted a wire sling, and passed a line around the body of the safe, making it secure from one part of the wire sling to the other. We were a whole day sawing and prying a skylight off, with the hope that the safe could be hoisted out. It weighed about a ton, but under water did not weigh a quarter of a ton. We signalled for those on deck to hoist away, and when we got the safe clear of the skylight signalled to "vast hoisting," until we got up onto the lighter.

I never knew what was in the safe, but it was rumored around that the contents were worth thirty thousand pounds. Gold digging was played out in Australia, and Africa was becoming the source of Britain's supply, so that specie was sometimes sent in a fast sailing ship.

We were three months unloading the *Loch Ranza*, and

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had been very careful in placing the wire net at the entrance to the basin, and had always remembered to replace it when the tug came in or out.

The underwriters had not noised abroad the facts about all the cargo they had been able to salvage, and there were only about ten per cent of the cases broken. The ship probably went over the reef on the top of a mountainous sea, slightly ripping her bottom, though only the stump of her mizzen mast was standing out of the water upon our arrival. The remainder of her cargo, which was valuable, was casks of bottled beer and stout, and about two hundred and fifty tons of steel.

Our last week proved disastrous. A diver was coming up the ladder, and had nearly reached the top, when a shark grabbed his arm, making a clean cut just below his right elbow. The man attending his air pump and the line nearly went over the side when the diver fell off the ladder.

At once all hands hauled up the wounded man, and applied a tourniquet. The tug had arrived that morning to take the loaded lighter to port, but, leaving the lighter behind, rushed the wounded diver to the hospital in Melbourne. He recovered from the shock, and the company treated him well, and I heard that they gave him work which he could perform in his disabled condition.

We took everything out of the ship except one hundred tons of fire brick, and then a storm came on that forced us to seek shelter in the little harbor. As soon as the tug returned from the emergency trip, the loaded lighter was taken in tow, while we continued to load the floating derrick with steel and fire brick. We were mighty glad to leave the wreck, but the experience gained in handling



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freight under difficulties was worth all I had gone through.

I have written in a rather flippant way about my encounter with the shark. But, I can assure you, that I did not feel flippant at the time. With a secret pride, I did exult in the knowledge that nerve, stamina, and decision had been mine in quantity enough to carry me through such an episode. That incident, I have no doubt, equipped me to meet and overcome difficult situations in the years to come.

The wrecking firm paid us off, and gave each diver a bonus of twenty-five pounds. It had been a hard grind, that wrecking job, away from everything, but no worse, after all, than life at sea on a clipper. We were well fed, and I was in good physical condition, ready to have taken on another wrecking job if it had been offered to me.

I went to the man who owned the ballast schooners, and he would gladly have hired me again but for the fact that most of the ships were taking sand for ballast, at less than half of what they paid for stone.

I figured that my career in the Anchor Line was ruined through my own foolishness, but proudly pondered over the Great Lakes and my good record there. It might be a good place to go, after all? By taking a ship to Frisco I could work my way to Chicago, and arrive there by the end of May. My earnings on the wrecking job had been sent to Glasgow, with only enough kept out to buy a new suit. How glad I was that the little family did not suffer through my foolishness.

I went to Sydney for my clothes, and the next day shipped before the mast on the iron ship *British Empire*. I got a month's advance, which I sent to my wife. Business was very dull in Sydney, and there was no chance

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for an officer's berth. I did not know what was ahead of me, or where I would land, but, knowing that the dear ones at home were well provided for, thought I would take a chance on going to Frisco. The *British Empire* was a Welsh ship, with Welsh officers. Most of her men had deserted in Sydney on account of the poor fare, and the bullying manners of the officers. When the men and myself went on board, it seemed as if the officers wanted to start something right away, and gave us to understand that we would have to toe the mark. They hardly gave us time to get into a working rig, and I could see at once that there was going to be blood on the lid of her before we reached Frisco.

The second mate was harder to please than the chief. He was quite a large, heavy man, under thirty years of age, and showed great strength, but was awkward and slow in his movements. Captain Davies had very little to say, and was, I thought, inclined to be decent.

I, for one, was determined to keep out of trouble, and unless threatened with assault by the second mate, in whose watch I was, would keep the peace.

We were put to work scaling inside the ship, that is, chipping the rust off. About four weeks after leaving Sydney our second mate became abusive, and found fault with me for being away from the job too long while sharpening a scraper. I never answered him, which only heaped coals on the fire. He knew that I had been an officer, and concluded that I was a scalawag, or I would not be "before the mast." He told me to get to work, and gave me a shove. I warned him to keep his hands off, and he did, thinking that, down in the 'tween decks, with no one to help him, some of the hard cases among



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the crew would likely take a hand in the fight. He must have reported the affair to the Captain and chief mate, and made out that I was a ringleader, and should be disciplined for resisting his authority.

All hands were ordered to tighten the yard braces, and take a swing on the top-gallant and royal halliards, and sheets. My watch was going off duty at 6 P.M., and as I walked forward the second mate called my name, and also called me another name.

He said, "You wanted to fight in the 'tween decks this afternoon? Well, I will give you all the fight you want, right now!" He tried to rush and down me, as he aimed a vicious blow at my face. A man called Jim Doyle jumped between us, and the chief mate struck him for not allowing the second mate to overwhelm me. Doyle laid the mate out with one crack on the jaw, and the Captain made a rush for the poop deck, but several of the sailors stopped him, when they realized that he wanted to get his revolver.

Doyle told the Captain that he wanted to see what his bucko second mate could do beside talk. I had taken off my jacket and shirt, and the crew let the second mate do the same, declaring we should both get fair play. The months I spent handling the large pieces of stone ballast on the wrecking job, had hardened my muscles, but I now required all my strength and knowledge of the fighting game to hold out against that Welshman.

The Captain insisted several times that the fight be stopped, but the crew told him that the second mate had started it, and he was getting what he deserved for bullying the crew that deserted in Sydney.

I fancied that I was the one who was "getting it," for

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I could see only a little out of one eye. When the Captain again insisted on stopping the fight, Doyle consented, and the second mate was led aft, and I was half carried forward, while the blood left a trail all along the deck.

The forecastle crew thought I had done very well, as the second mate weighed one hundred and ninety pounds, against my one hundred and sixty-five. I was ashamed of myself, however, to be mixed up in such a brutal affair. Why did I resent the nasty ways of that second mate? What would my Aggie say if she saw my bruised face?

I knew that the Captain and mate were so mortified over the affair that they would signal the first sighted British man-of-war, and ask for help to quell what they would call a mutiny. Doyle and I would be the ones prosecuted. A sailor had no chance of receiving justice, and the Captain and officers always received the decision, especially if the case was tried by the Captain of a naval ship. Such were the ways of the sea, fifty years ago.



## CHAPTER XV

### *Shanghaied in Frisco; Back to Wife and Weans*

WE made Frisco in fifty-eight days, without any more trouble. The officers were subdued, and we executed their orders as if nothing had happened. All the men who shipped in Sydney were leaving the ship, and I never shipped with any other intention, but figured on slipping away from the boarding house to which the runners took us, and getting on a freight train, and in some way reaching Chicago.

I had often heard about being shanghaied, and evidently was about to learn what it really meant. Try as we might, Doyle and I could not get away from the watchful care of a runner who seemed to dog our steps. Several times we reached the outskirts of the city, and were gently, but firmly, told to retrace our steps, in case we got lost. We were finally shipped on a vessel called the *Argonaut*, of Baltimore, bound to Queenstown for orders. Another chap of the *British Empire's* crew was put on this ship with us. Garmany was his name, and he was my protector who took the lead on the *British Empire* and prevented the Captain from using his revolver, while I was fighting the second mate. They were a pair of ugly customers, and I should have been in better company.

While in Frisco our boarding master gave us fifty cents per day to spend, and when he handed me my bill for the three days ashore, it amounted to eighty-nine dollars and fifty cents. To make it an even ninety dollars I got

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a lemonade bottle of bad whiskey, and a pair of cheap socks.

The scheme: A fee was charged for being put ashore, five dollars for putting me on my new ship, and shipping master's and consul's fees made up the remainder. Everyone, including the American consul, was concerned in robbing the poor sailor. No wonder that the men who were treated in this way became hard, degraded, and homeless.

The outlook for Doyle, Garmany, and myself was that we would have thirty dollars due us when we reached England, if we made the passage in four months. The other three months, at thirty per month, was gobbled up by the sharks in Frisco. This game went on for years, and Captains were often killed for shipping men who were not out of the regular boarding houses. A friend of mine, who was Captain of the *City of Tanjore*, shipped two men who were in a private boarding house. The night before his ship sailed he was waylaid in the dark, and beaten so badly that he was laid up for a month. Brass knuckles were used, and when these robbers got a man down they used their boots to kick in his face. There was no law, either in Frisco or Callao, especially in the sixties and seventies of the last century, able to curb or control that robber gang. It made me feel ugly to be downed, with no chance to fight back. What a terrible prospect ahead, to work three months for nothing! It was a dreadful condition, but what could I do?

The Captain probably received only five dollars for the men he hired, and might make in addition a few months' wages, which had been left behind by the men who deserted in Frisco.

Thus, we jogged along, and crossed the equator four-



*Shanghaied in Frisco; Back to Wife and Weans*

teen days after leaving San Francisco. How I prayed that something would happen to prevent me from working three months for nothing!

The days seemed long, and the nights hotter than

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Just as we got out of the southeast trades, in latitude 26° south, a squall suddenly struck us when we had all sails set. All hands were called on deck, and orders given to lower the royal and top-gallant sails, but for some reason the fore top-gallant and upper topsail would not respond, and, as a violent gust of wind struck the ship, the foretopmast went over the side, taking with it the main topmast and top-gallant mast. To make matters worse, the foremast was sprung just above the rigging, as well as the bowsprit close to the bow of the ship.

I suspected that some conspiracy was brewing, together with the fact that the fore top-gallant and topsail yards would not act when the squall struck, made me feel sure that Doyle and Garmany had accomplished more than rack the halliards aloft, in order to cause such destruction.

They had spent quite a lot of time around the topmast and top-gallant back stays on the foremast, and I watched a chance, when they went below about nine-thirty P.M. (the squall had struck us about six-thirty P.M.), to survey the lanyards of the foretopmast back stays. To my surprise they had been sawed nearly through, close to the dead eyes, and the lanyards nearly all unrove, and thrown overboard. Upon their return to deck I was as far away from the tell-tale lanyards as I could run. Something unpleasant might have happened to me had I voiced my suspicions! I was playing safe!

We worked all night, saving all we could, and getting

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

the broken masts clear of the ship, while they threatened to damage the hull.

The Captain did not make any great fuss over the accident. Of course, it would be an insurance job, and he could very easily make money on the repairs! The wind was fair for Valparaiso, Chili, and we made port in six days. We set a big staysail from the foremast head to the stump of the bowsprit, and the fore and mainsails, with the sails on mizzen, enabled us to make about five knots an hour. We nearly all deserted the ship, especially those who were shanghaied in Frisco, and the Captain did nothing to stop us from going ashore. A good angel must have been watching over me, for I met the man who was third mate on the *Great Northern* when we were wrecked on Bassein Shoals. We immediately recognized each other. He had been made Captain of the ship *Kenilworth*, leaving the next day for Liverpool. His chief mate had broken his leg, and his second mate did not have a chief mate's certificate, so he was delighted to ship me. He must have thought it strange to find me before the mast, and on a ship from Frisco. I related some of my wild story, and he thought me foolish to have allowed the Captain of the *Cynisca* to drive me to violence and a jail sentence. Of course I had to tell him about Aggie and the weans, and how well they were provided for.

The *Kenilworth* was a full rigged ship, with skysails on each mast, and altogether was a typical, well found, British ship.

Captain Fitsroy was a perfect gentleman, and a thorough sailor. He had advanced step by step to Captain, and compared with me, now a rough neck, had attained



## *Shanghaied in Frisco; Back to Wife and Weans*

that position without going through all the discouraging conditions that had been my lot.

I had suffered, and had experienced no real peace of mind since I had gone to sea, until I joined the *Kenilworth*. Always with the dread of getting into trouble, along with the disgrace of a jail sentence—life on the sea had thus far seemed unfair. My experience as a diver had been a constant strain, and with the fear that something might happen to cut off the air supply, or a fight any minute with our ever present enemy, the shark. I could feel myself becoming brutalized by my surroundings.

Then the trip from Sydney to Frisco, with the starvation rations supplied by the owner, Davis, of Menia Bridge, Wales, who was M.P. for Carnarvon. The savagery of the whole trip, filled with suspicion and distrust, made me thankful that I had reached a haven of rest on the *Kenilworth*. Although I imagined it was always the fault of the other fellow, I was disgusted with fighting, and really wanted to act more like a decent chap, and be worthy of the sweet, loving, little wife I had won. The degrading fight on the *British Empire* was still fresh in my memory, and I really believed that, if I was again provoked, that nothing could make me fight. Sometimes I wished that one of the sailors on the *Kenilworth* would hand me one, just to demonstrate my control. I am grateful, however, that the devil passed me by, or I might have fallen from the high state of grace in which I imagined myself.

We had some stormy weather rounding Cape Horn, about the end of August. Bitter cold, and violent snowstorms were encountered; but for the third time in my life, I passed the Cape safely, and squared away for

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

home, and the dear ones waiting for the wanderer's return.

We arrived in Liverpool seventy-eight days from Valparaiso. I had been eighteen months away, and my little son was nearly fourteen months old. My wife came to Liverpool, and I was comforted beyond words to have her put loving, sheltering arms around me. What a happy ten days we had together, enjoying our little ones! My wife was anxious that I should quit the sea, but what could I do ashore? It was a problem.



## CHAPTER XVI

### *Longshoring in New York*

I KEPT thinking of what Captain Nicol had said to me in New York, during a longshore strike, when he suggested that I would make a good foreman, and could handle men.

The *Kenilworth* was chartered for a trip to New York, and as I was going in her anyway, so as to have servitude enough to pass for Captain, I decided to have a personal interview with Captain Nicol before making plans for the future.

We left Liverpool during the latter part of November, and had a long passage of thirty-five days to New York. I called on Captain Nicol, and found him in a receptive mood.

The head stevedore, Jack Scott, was a rough customer, and around seventy years of age. He had been a sailor and boatswain in the old packet days, and had become very hard, and seemed to have not a trace of tender feeling in his make-up.

Having witnessed so many brutal scenes of bloodshed, while crossing the western ocean, he had become brutal himself.

I returned to Liverpool in the *Kenilworth* in February, 1880, and after spending a few happy weeks with my family, went out to New York in the S.S. *State of Pennsylvania*.

I had met the Chief Officer while with the Allan Line,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

and he very kindly allowed me to work my passage. Not being on the articles, I could not be put on the lookout at night.

However, my first job in New York was driving a winch. Someone told the stewardess who had been on the *Devonia* that Bob Ramsay was driving number four winch, and as she came along the deck she exclaimed, "Mr. Ramsay, what are you doing?"

I replied, "I am working for a living, and not ashamed of it, either."

Many of my old friends among the officers and engineers wondered why I had become a longshoreman. I considered it a business which had to be learned if one expected to take charge of a ship and load her correctly.

In about six weeks I was told by Jack Scott to take charge of a gang which was going to work all night. A few weeks afterward I was made walking boss on the dock, which ranked me as third foreman, and also gave me a steady job, whether a ship was in or not.

It seemed quite safe now to send for Aggie and the weans. We had three hundred pounds in the bank in Glasgow, which Aggie brought with her; and I had a house ready for my family in the Bay Ridge district of Brooklyn when they arrived.

The glamour of the sea had lost its hold on my imagination, as the old clippers which I loved were fast disappearing, and their places taken by ugly looking tramp steamers. I was thankful that out of my adventure I had come through whole of limb, and with good, rugged health.

There was no compensation law in 1880, and there was always something going on, and a great many men were



## *Longshoring in New York*

killed and injured. Two-thirds of the longshoremen were Irish, and good workers.

I was advised to join the union when I became a longshoreman. The Anchor Line piers were then at the foot of Dey Street, and they had piers 20 and 21. The longshore union met in a hall on Greenwich Street, near Rector, and I attended some of these meetings, which were often very stormy, and with language far from parliamentary. "Sit down, you ——," was often the advice given to one another. I was amused when a man called Paddy McAniney got up and succeeded in getting the floor.

He said, "Mister Prisident, I have a notion, to make a motion, that we whitewash the hall green."

The motion was put to the meeting, and passed without any debate. Had anyone been foolhardy enough to propose whitewashing it yellow, red would have been the prevailing color.

The Knights of Labor was a strong organization at that time, and was inducing all the unions to amalgamate with them, to the great injury of the longshoremen.

Some of my readers who were young in the eighties will remember red cheeked Apple Mary, who sat at the corner of Dey and West Streets. I asked her one day what she did on Sunday. Her reply was, "Go to mass, to save my soul." She was a decent old body, of good old Irish stock.

We had a sturdily built Scotchman named Smith who was struck by an oak plank, just below the left eye. He lost the eye, and bought a glass one in its place. One of the longshoremen named Bo's'un McCann was congratulating Smith on his recovery. He admired the glass eye,

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

and, looking at Tom Smith very earnestly, said, "Tom, can you see good wid it?"

I had become second foreman under Scott, and in 1883 the largest steamer we had ever handled came to New York, flying the Anchor Line house flag. She was built for the Inman Line, and named *City of Rome*. She was built at Barrow, in Furness, and, not coming up to contract speed, was rejected by the Inman Line. She had a long, clipper bow, and a bowsprit which went over the head of the pier into West Street, when we docked her at the foot of Leroy Street, at what was then pier 41.

Of course there never was anything prettier in this world than a ship under full sail; but I think that, as a marine picture, to view the *City of Rome* coming up North River, with a bone in her teeth, and that long, clipper bow, was an inspiring spectacle.

As I have hinted, the Knights of Labor were busy, and dragged the longshoremen into a strike by trying to make the Old Dominion Line a union dock. They told the longshoremen not to handle any freight which came from that line. The steamship lines would not allow dictation, especially in view of the fact that the longshoremen started the strike on a Saturday morning, when ordered out to work at five A.M.

After the strike of seven weeks, instead of receiving sixty cents per hour for overtime, the men received only forty-five. The Anchor Line also employed colored men, and did not recognize the union.

Jack Scott retired, and I became head foreman. This was a splendid opportunity, and had I left whiskey alone, all would have been well. There was always drinking on the ships, and we never went on West Street to hire men



## *Longshoring in New York*

without visiting the saloon. With spells of never touching liquor for three months, and then, under some strain, starting again, Captain Nicol allowed that he could tell by the general tone of the dock, when he came on it each morning, whether Ramsay was off or on the water wagon. Whiskey never seemed to get into my feet, and I was always able to walk straight. When I had a real, hard job to do, liquor was left alone.

In the winter season, ships might arrive Wednesday p.m., instead of Monday, but had to leave Saturday on schedule time. This condition kept me on my feet until the job was finished, and for that reason Captain Nicol put up with a lot of drinking on my part.

In 1889 one of our steamers named the *Furnessia* was chartered by Barnum to convey the circus to London. The ship arrived from Glasgow on Wednesday with three thousand tons of general cargo, which we discharged in Brooklyn. We then half filled her with cargo, putting on every animal connected with the show, and she sailed for London at noon on Sunday. That was a strenuous time, with having had only three hours' sleep. The many years of hard work have not shortened my life, as I am now hale and hearty at the age of eighty years.

On the twenty-fifth of January, 1892, Captain Nicol asked me when I was going to quit drinking. I said, "Tonight." He wanted to know why that particular night, and I told him it was Bobby Burns' anniversary, and that I was going to the annual supper in Brooklyn.

There was a great deal of whiskey drunk that night, but it was two and one-half years before I touched it again.

The next day I left my home, never stopping for an eye

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

opener on my way to the Anchor Line dock at the foot of West Twenty-fourth Street. That proved a long day, but I was determined there was going to be a long time between drinks.

I was dry, and when John, the policeman on our dock, observed me drinking a glass of cold water, he exclaimed, "Ramsay, do you want to kill yourself?"

I had made the same promise to Aggie that I made to Captain Nicol, and when I arrived home she embraced me, and cried with joy. But the dear one realized that I was under temptation all the time, and that my spells of sobriety were getting shorter, and my drinking spells longer.

One night she handed me an advertisement in a New York paper, of a fifty-acre farm for sale in New England, and said that she had written to inquire about it. Aggie said that I was not like her old sweetheart, and was becoming coarse in my language through associating with the rough men on the waterfront. "Before you get killed, or whiskey kills you, give it all up," she pleaded.

I was making good money, and it was hard for me to give it up, yet I could see my wife's judgement was good. We bought the farm, and stock, and Aggie was satisfied and happy that I was away from my old cronies, and the bar-rooms on West Street.

Captain Nicol was astonished when I told him that I was leaving, but when I mentioned the way my wife felt, he had to admit she was right. I remained on the dock for two weeks with the man who took my place. I am sorry to say that he lasted only two years, and was discharged for drinking. My associates on the waterfront had a banquet in my honor, and presented me with a purse



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with \$250 in gold. All kinds of liquor flowed freely, but not a drop crossed my lips.

I was not many months on the farm until I realized that the life would never suit me. I made up my mind to just have a rest and a change, but back to the ships I would go. There were quite a lot of apples on the farm, and the experience I had gained in shipping apples to Glasgow made me go to several farmers around and buy their apples on the trees. I hired a cooper, and went around to the bakeshops in the near-by towns and bought barrels by the hundreds. The apples were picked carefully, and sorted, sending only first-class fruit to Glasgow.

I loaded the cars myself, and sent them to the Allan Line in Boston. The apples brought good prices in Glasgow, and I was well paid for my work.

A friend of the man from whom I had bought the farm took back the place, and I had an auctioneer advertise and sell the horses and everything else that the regular patrons of auctions would bid on. I was surprised at the money people paid for old stuff that had been around the place for fifty years.

Aggie submitted to the giving up of the farm, but said, "No more New York. We will settle in Boston."

I had saved, or rather my wife had, quite a sum of money, so we went to a suburb of Boston and bought a little home, and moved our belongings there. A stevedore friend introduced me to another stevedore who put me on as a foreman over a gang just having one hatch to load. Then this gentleman became stevedore of the Leyland Line, and I went with him as second foreman and timekeeper.

One of the ships went ashore in the narrows, just above

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

Boston Light, and we hired lighters and unloaded twelve hundred tons, floated the steamer, undamaged, and put the cargo back. That was the longest spell I ever went without sleep. From Tuesday morning at six A.M. until Saturday P.M. I never was off my feet, unless to take time to eat. I must have stored up some energy while on the farm.

During a strike, and under a heavy strain, working for days without sleep, I took a few drinks of brandy, which I would have been far better without. My Aggie was at a watering place on the coast, and did not know of my lapse.

I became general foreman on the Leyland Line, and served strenuous days and nights when they built steamers which would carry ten thousand tons weight, beside eleven hundred steers.



## CHAPTER XVII

### *Helping Win the War*

THEN came the war, and every ounce of freight we could pack into them, in the shape of shells, barbed wire, and provisions, kept me, as a rule, two nights each week without sleep.

After loading the ships we added to each one twelve hundred horses.

We lost a number of ships by submarine, and there was no way to replace them. Some of my young boy readers were only entering life in 1916 and 1917, when those ships were being sunk. I used to get a full description of what happened to those ships, from the officers who were on them when they tried to run away from the submarines. I will relate just what the mate of the *Armenian* told me happened when they sighted a submarine four miles distant.

The steamer had a full load of horses from New Orleans, just the kind of a cargo the Germans were anxious to sink, and the Allies were just as anxious to land for use in France, some for the cavalry, and some for the artillery.

After a consultation the Captain and the Chief Officer decided to ram the submarine. If they succeeded, all sorts of honors would be showered upon them. As they approached they were met by destructive shell fire that killed and injured twenty-three men, mostly horsemen. The

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

Captain realized at once that he had made a mistake, and turned his ship, and attempted to run away.

If he had turned when he had four miles of water between, he might have escaped, but he was now just where the German wanted him—within easy range of his shell fire.

The chief engineer, a man whom I knew very well, sat on top of the engine room skylight and shouted down to his crew just how the chase was going, and encouraged them to add to the speed of the steamer. A shell landed on the engine room skylight and wrecked the engine. My friend was not killed, but some small splinters of steel injured his back.

The submarine came along, and, to express his disapproval of any ship trying to ram him, or run away, continued some shell firing. The boat falls were cut on one boat while it was being lowered, and several men were drowned.

After all the survivors had settled into the life boats, the chief mate told me, a colored horseman remained on deck, and, being badly injured, could not make his way to the rail of the ship, to reach a boat. The chief mate had tried to get him onto his feet, but the wounded man advised him to leave, and save his own life. That little mate was a hero. He carried the poor, colored chap onto the rail, and grabbing the boat fall, made the wounded man clasp him around the neck, and then slid down. He burned his hands to the bone, but he saved the horseman's life. He was six months recovering.

Of course the submarine sunk the *Armenian* with the three thousand horses that comprised her cargo.

In the spring of 1918 I determined to do something



## *Helping Win the War*

to help win the war, so applied for a commission in the stevedore regiments being formed to discharge the steamers being sent to France with supplies.

The age limit was fifty-four. I was sixty-seven. The old adage, "A man is as old as he feels," occurred to me, and my moral strength was so strained by my desire to help in the war, that I gave my age as fifty-four. The officer in New York said that I did not look my age, probably on account of my outdoor life, and he gave me the necessary papers to fill out, which called for three well known shipping men for references, recommending me for Captain in a stevedore regiment. I also had to pass the Army physical examination, which I did at Fort Banks in Boston, and sent my papers to New York, with the conviction that I would no doubt get a Major's commission before leaving for France.

I was then assistant superintendent on the Leyland Line, and also other lines for which my employer did work. Things were rosy, but not right. One of my grandsons asked my wife if she knew her husband was only fifty-four years of age.

The fat was in the fire, and I got no sleep that night until I promised Aggie to write at once to New York and admit my age.

I did this, and received a very nice letter from the Colonel in charge, who said that they had a great many cases of men who lied to keep out of the Army, but that lying to get in was a new one. He was coming to Boston in a few days, and would notify me when to meet him, and said they could use me, with my experience, but no France for me.

The Army doctor remarked when examining me that

## *Rough and Tumble on Old Clipper Ships*

it was pretty hard lines when men of my age had to get into this war game. He was also fifty-four!

A friend told me that they were looking for a man to take charge of the rigging gang, and the installation of heavy machinery in a ship yard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. I took this job, thinking I could be of more use to my country there than in any other place. Ships were needed to take the place of those which were being sunk. There were five ways in the yard, so that five ships could be building at once.

The ships were to be of ninety-four hundred tons burden.

All the cranes had to be put together, and put overhead to handle the material, also the travelling cranes for placing the frames and plates while building the ships.

I was so glad that I could help win the war. After getting a few days to look around and pick my men, the manager said that I had to get a forty-ton roller in place, to be used in bending plates. It had to be placed on top of two rollers of seventeen tons each, and these latter were seven feet from the floor. The forty-ton piece was lying buried in the mud, where it had been dumped off two flat cars.

After getting it out of the mud, and opposite the other two rollers, it was put in place with the aid of only small crab winches and tackles.

I found the work interesting, but after the Armistice my wife and I spent a restful winter in Florida.

Upon my return to Boston I became Shore Captain for a shipping concern, and, though I retired a few years ago, I sometimes superintend the loading of ships for the same company.



## *Helping Win the War*

My wife died in 1920, after we had been nearly fifty years together.

I have tried to tell what life was on the sea in my young days, and also about longshore life in New York forty-five years ago.

I must apologize for presuming to enter the writing field, and hope that my story, though told in a halting, crude way, will be as interesting as I have tried to make it truthful.

I have always loved adventure and change, but I think the adventure and change from loading ships to story writing is the most daring thing I have ever tried; but will leave my readers to be the judges.

(1)

THE END

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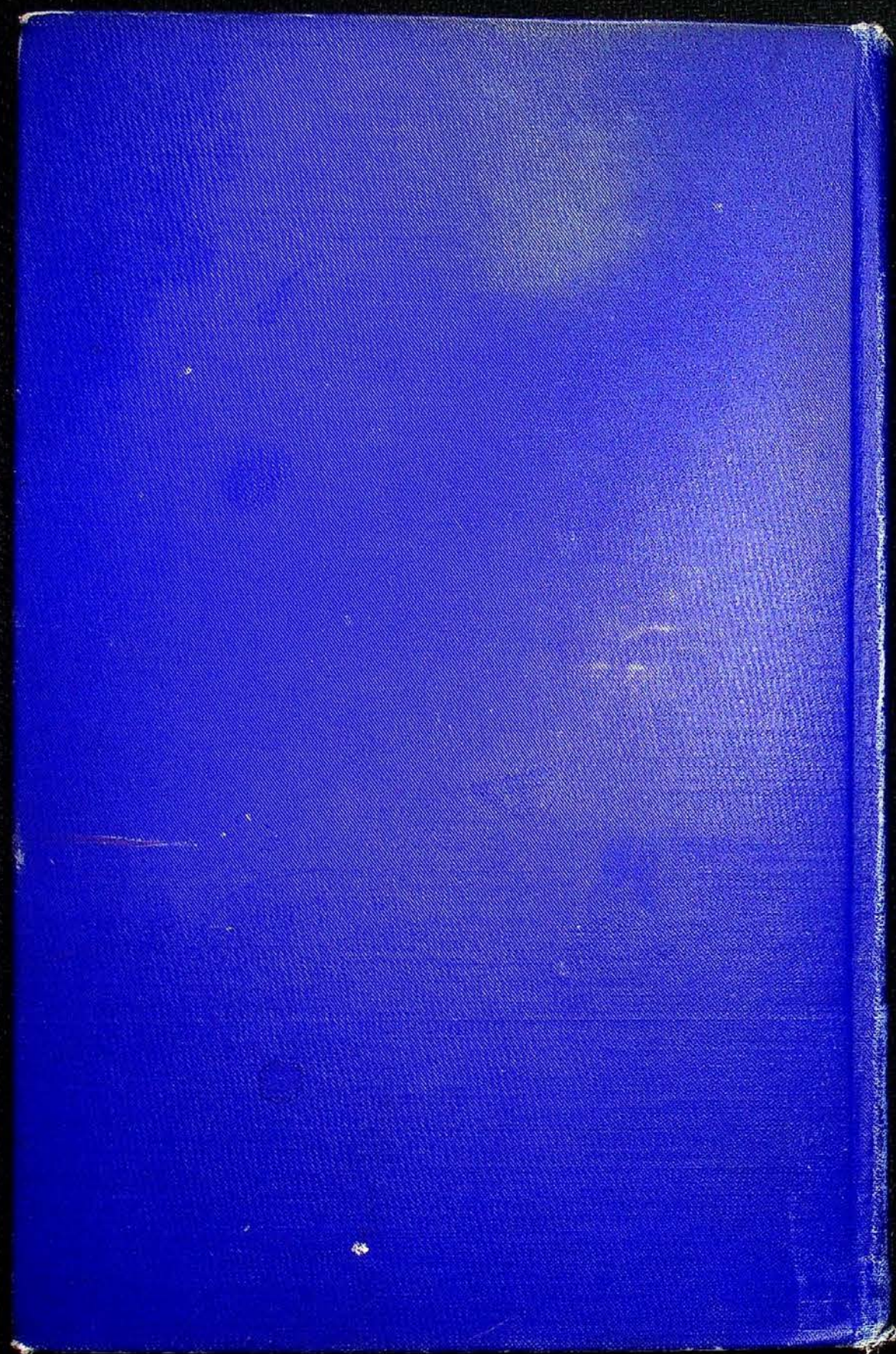
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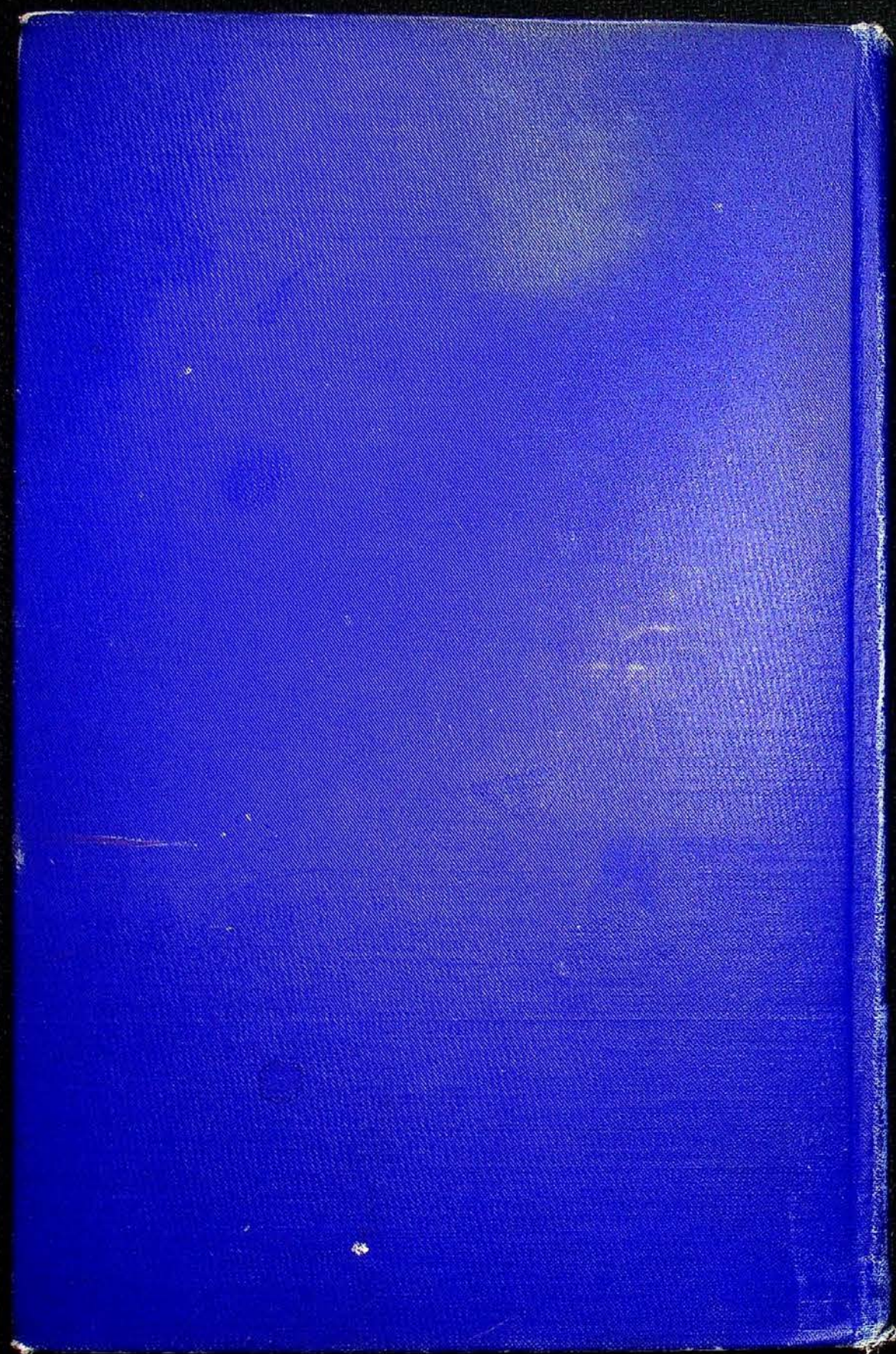


**Santa Teresita School**











THE  
CLIPPER  
SHIP  
"SHEILA"

CAPTAIN  
W. H. ANGEL

LAUREL Co.